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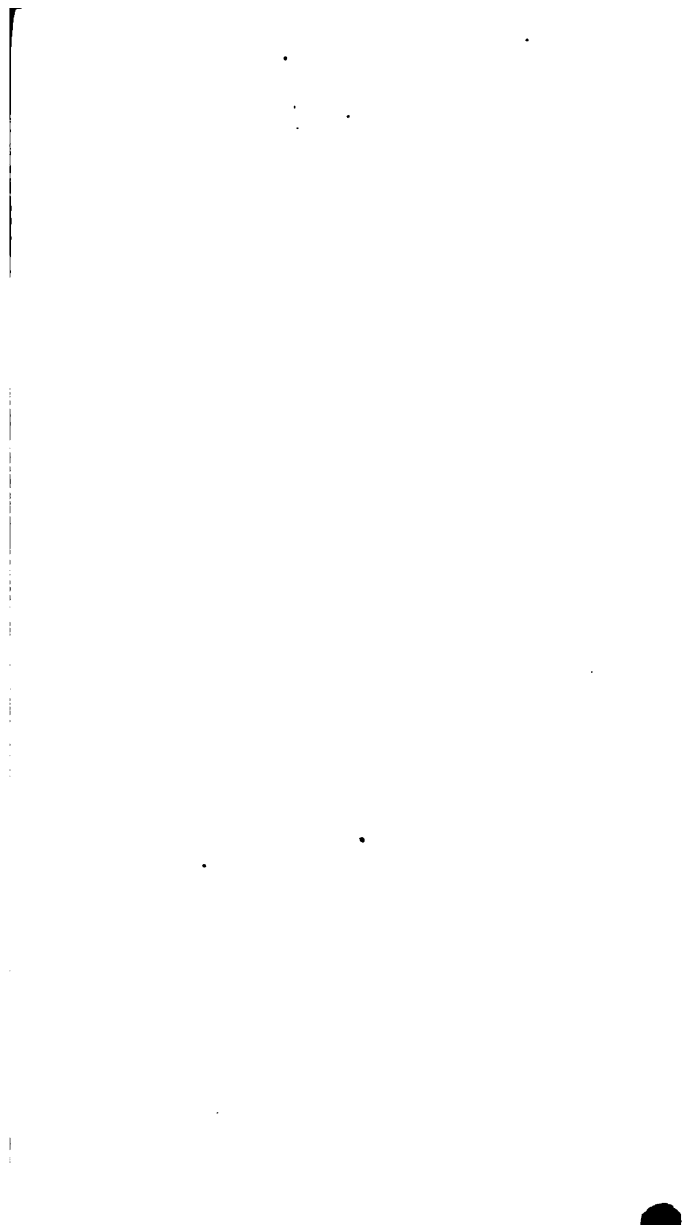
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# KINLEY HOLLOW.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SQUIRREL TRAP.

OUR little village was as remote from the great struggles of life as if it had been a world by itself. The meeting-house, the school-house, and the town hall were all the public buildings we had, and the minister, the doctor, the two deacons, and a few country gentlemen were the only great men that we young folks ever saw, except on public days when the gentry of the adjoining towns made us a visit. Of our great men, the minister was the first in rank and also in endowments. He had not, at first sight, a clerical appearance. He was a tall, stout man with a florid complexion, broad forehead made white by the contrast of black curly hair and had emotional dark eyes. His mouth was both large and handsome, firm as a rock in its moral expression, but had the same nervous tone as the eye indicated and was alive with sensibility. This is a little outline only of a face that had more presence in it than any other that I ever saw in my young days—a face that I can see now whenever I choose to recall it, as distinctly as when I used to watch it with a child's admiration. Dr. John Stanyan was about forty years old when I first began to be impressed by his appearance and charac-

ter; and the occasion of my making him a study forms a little era in a very uneventful childhood. My father, James Everett, a grandson of a former clergyman of the place, lived about a mile easterly from the village on a ridge running parallel with it. He was a farmer, and owned about five hundred acres of excellent land with pleasant meadows and orchards, and dotted with patches of woods that had never been cut over, and looked as grey and wild as they did when the Indians possessed the country.

There was no end of the little airy knolls and nooky recesses on the farm. Between our ridge and the village was a dell entirely wooded called Kinley Hollow, with a beautiful natural mole or causeway forming a curb to a fretful little brook that never could rest anywhere until it had fought its way out into the light of the open valley that lay to the southeast, two miles further down. This mole, which was several feet above the brook, was wide enough for half a dozen persons to walk abreast on its green and yellow carpet of moss that flickered with spangles of sunlight wherever they could pass through the interspaces of the tall trees that gloomed above. On the right bank of the brook was a precipice, a hundred feet in height, with jagged sides of granite half hidden by stunted evergreens. This ledge dipped down at the foot of the hollow and formed a succession of shelves over which the brook by several desperate leaps broke away from its irksome prison, and entered upon a life of quiet enjoyment.

But I am forgetting the occasion hinted at just now. My father was a deacon in Dr. Stanyan's church, and was very stern with me in all matters relating to religious discipline. I was kept under such close restraint that at a very tender age I began to brood over what I thought was a wanton tyranny and disregard of my feelings, especially in relation to the disposal of my time on Saturday evenings and on the Sabbath day.

I was now fourteen years old, and one Saturday afternoon, contrary to my father's oft-repeated commands, I stole out into the fields, with a wooden trap

under my arm, and baited it under a walnut tree, hoping to catch a squirrel on the following day. My absence was not observed and on my return I spent, I suppose, half an hour in the chimney corner calculating the chances of my experiment. I went to bed perfectly satisfied with myself, and awoke in the cool frosty morning as happy as the day just dawning over the hills. After prayers were over I began to get ready to go to meeting, as we used to call it in those days, and several times broke out into song while I was putting on my Sunday clothes. My father checked me more than once by calling out to me from the foot of the stairs, for being so light-headed. When I came down into the breakfast room with my hair as smooth as I could make it, and my heart quite as buoyant I must own as was consistent with the solemnities of the day, he called me up to him in a tone that brought my spirits down to a level of circumspection in a moment.

"Frank," he said, looking sharply at me, "you found no time to attend to the sermon last Sunday. *Somebody* whispered in the gallery. Perhaps you know who did it, but I don't mean to tempt you and so I will not ask you."

Indignant at this intimation that I might tell a lie if questioned, I grew very red in the face and answered stoutly:

"I helped do it, sir."

"You need confess nothing till you are accused," replied my father coldly. "Here is the book; you know what is expected of you. Mind, you are to read fifty pages before I come back. If your mother is able to hear it, you can read it aloud."

As he spoke he handed me that hated treatise of Griffin on the Atonement, and went out without saying another word. So I was to stay at home and pass the day in poring over a book of which I did not understand a word.

"Had he flogged me," I said to myself, "it would have been to the purpose, but this dreadful punish-

ment, I can't stand it," and I threw the book on the floor in a paroxysm of rage.

"Pick it up, Frank," said my mother quietly. I stooped and caught it by one corner, as a schoolmaster snips a culprit boy by the ears. I stood up in the middle of the room and fell doggedly to the task as a convict does at his.

"Sit down," said my mother at length. "I feel stronger than I did, and should like to hear you read. It is a good book, I believe, only rather hard for a child; perhaps I can explain it."

"I don't care if it were the Bible," I said defiantly; "I hate to be made good in such a way."

However, I sat down and read out ten pages steadily without shedding a tear. When I stopped to take breath she pressed her fingers through my hair and said:

"Wait awhile, Frank, and let me tell you what it means."

She unfolded the hard propositions in her gentle way as quietly as a flower spreads itself out to the sun. When she had finished she said:

"Is it clear to you?"

"Yours is," I answered, "but not his. I hate *him*."

I gnashed my teeth at Griffin with a grimace that no author could have regarded as complimentary. I don't know what else I should have done, had not a sigh from my mother brought me to my bearings.

"Now, mother, for a run!" I said, drawing in my breath.

I made a plunge and started off on the dusty hardpan of the eleventh page at a round pace. She went into a fit of hysterical laughter, (I could always make her laugh) and that restored my equanimity. I read fifteen pages, received the explanation, read fifteen more, swallowed the running commentary, and then took a recess for lunch. At the end of an hour when I took up the book again, she said encouragingly:

"Only ten more, Frank. You can do a page in

three minutes, hard as it is. Half an hour more will finish it. Stand aside and let me look at Uncle Gilbert; I'll keep the time."

We always called the clock "Uncle Gilbert," because her brother Gilbert had left it to her in his will. This allusion to the time-piece by its name put me in good humor, and I read with a will. In thirty minutes I had served out my time. I was free, and my mother under the influence of the irresistible opiate was fast asleep. I straddled the open pages of Griffin across my head, called him Grif, and made up mouths at him in the looking-glass till I was tired of it. I looked at "Uncle Gilbert." It was just three o'clock.

Which of us it was that spoke, the Devil or Frank Everett, I can't say, but I heard the words distinctly spoken by one of us:

"Now for the squirrel trap!"

I jerked Griffin off my head and my cap on it in the same instant; opened the door, closed it softly, looked up and down the road stealthily, and started off at a pace rather slow at first, but accelerated by curiosity until I came to the fence near the walnut tree, when I got down on my hands and knees and crawled to a point where I could catch the first glimpse of the trap.

It was sprung. I went up, opened the mouth a little and peeped in. There was a gray squirrel as big as a half-grown kitten, aching to get out, as was apparent from his wistful look as well as from the chips of pine that he had gnawed from one corner of his prison and scattered about the floor. Inspired by the cat-like instinct that every mischievous boy has in him, I resolved to be in no hurry to dispatch my victim, but to enjoy the triumph at my leisure. I did not have to look far for entertainment. The ground was all covered over with beautiful white nuts. I fell to picking them up, a handful at a time, and cracking them. No nuts ever tasted so sweet as those did. Stealing an occasional look at the trap, I gathered and cracked and ate, until my tongue smarted with the acrid flavor of the yel-

lowish-white skins as I put the delicious tit-bits into my mouth.

Suddenly I heard a rustling in the leaves and looked up. It was my father. He stalked up to me, stood just long enough to freeze me with a glance of his small blue eye, and without speaking walked up to the trap, caught it and dashed it in pieces against a rock. Like a glimmer of twilight the squirrel shot across the field to a tree and disappeared in its topmost branches.

"Come home," said my father with an accent that froze me to the marrow.

In thinking this matter over, I have always ended with the conclusion that Cain was rather cheerful than otherwise, when questioned about the sudden disappearance of his brother. If he felt more miserable than I did as I followed my father home, I think the rest of his punishment ought to have been remitted.

When I entered the house, I found my father and mother in earnest conversation and she was in tears.

Contrary to my expectation my father turned to me and said without any demonstration of anger:

"Put on your hat and come with me."

I was a good deal puzzled by his quiet manner for I had expected that he would be violent. I made myself ready and took my seat in the chaise by his side with the best grace I could. He drove off toward the village at a rapid rate, without saying a word, and stopped in front of Dr. Stanyan's house. Suddenly the idea flashed upon me that the long-threatened retribution had come, and that a full disclosure of my shortcomings was to be made to the minister.

For the first time in my life I felt the desire to run away and throw myself upon my own resources. But I saw that I was a prisoner, and that escape was impossible.

The great brass knocker on the door in summoning the Doctor struck my heart several blows, every one of which seemed to crush it. I staggered into the entry and found my way to the sitting-room I hardly know how.

After a short whispered interview between Dr. Stanyan and my father the latter withdrew to the study and I was left alone with the man whom, of all persons on earth, I most dreaded.

"Come here, Frank," said the minister.

I walked up and stood before him at a little distance in the attitude of a criminal about to receive sentence.

"I said here, not there," resumed he, beckoning me to come closer.

I was small of my age and did not feel ashamed to sit down upon his knee. He put his hand over my ear and pulled my cheek up to his and gave me a smack that was louder than the ticking of the old French clock.

"Look at me, child," he said, "look straight into my eyes."

I obeyed.

"You can tell the truth I see; now tell me all about it, just as you would your mother."

I never was a lying boy, and his manner was such that I would have died rather than keep anything back. If I had committed murder I should have confided it to him, there was such an expression of sweetness in his eyes and the muscles of his mouth trembled so like a woman's with sympathy.

When I had finished my confession he asked, "What made you play in sermon time last Sunday? Did the Devil tempt you, do you think?"

I was not clear on this subject and didn't wish to implicate innocent parties, so I answered:

"No, sir; I don't think he had anything to do with it. It was just my own badness, sir. I did it on purpose."

To my great embarrassment he burst into a hearty fit of laughter. When he recovered a little he inquired:

"Did any other boy laugh and play with you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he begin or did you?"

"I can't tell; we both seemed to start off together."

"What boy was it?"

"I don't want to tell that, sir," breaking down in a spasm.

"Very well, there is no need of crying about it. I like you all the better for not throwing off the blame upon others, not even upon the Devil, if you don't think him guilty, and especially for not betraying the other boy. But the trap? Didn't you know that your father had forbidden you to set it on Saturday evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were you going to do with the squirrel?"

"Drown him in Kinley Brook, sir."

"And the nuts—did you think it right to crack them on the Lord's day in the open field?"

"I didn't stop to think, I was hungry; the Atonement—I mean Griffin, made me hungry."

"What," he asked with a puzzled look, "do you screen the Devil and lay the blame on Griffin?"

His eyes danced so that I thought he was going to laugh again.

"I don't mean to say, sir, that Grif—Griffin was to blame, but I don't feel as if I could forgive him if he *is* innocent," said I with firmness.

The clergyman opened his eyes in astonishment. "What is it? Tell me the whole story," said he.

I was entirely self-possessed now, and went through the details in a way that seemed to carry conviction with every word. When I had finished he said as if to himself:

"A manly fellow if he had anybody to manage him. I must do it if it is done."

"Well, well, my son," he went on, addressing himself to me. "I understand it all now. To-morrow you shall come and spend the day with Marcella, and I will see what can be done for you. One thing more; you have been doing wrong and you have confessed it; now tell me you are sorry and will try with God's help never to do so any more."

I promised. He made me kneel down with him,



and while he offered up a little prayer that a child could feel as well as understand, I promised secretly again.

When my father came out of the study the doctor and he whispered together for a minute and then we took our leave. As I was getting into the chaise, Dr. Stanyan, who stood in the door, called out to my father:

"Don't give the patient any more of that, deacon; it's too strong for him. Milk for babes, you know," and he shut the door without waiting for an answer.

## CHAPTER II.

### MARCELLA.

THE next morning I rose very early, my head and heart full of the contemplated visit. I was delighted to find my father so cheerful. The cloud had passed away from his forehead, and when I asked leave to go, he consented as if it did him good to say "Yes."

"Remember all that Dr. Stanyan says to you," he said.

"Be very civil to Marcella," called out my mother to me from the open window.

I promised to heed both injunctions, and started off with a bound. All the way to the village I busied myself with looking at a gallery of pictures that my imagination presented to me of what I should see and experience on that eventful day. I have always had an idea that I was born in such a gallery, for I cannot remember when I began to walk about in one, and see shapes and faces that were to haunt me through life.

I had already a confirmed habit of talking aloud to these airy existences, bidding them do this or that, questioning them of their intentions, banishing them and invoking them again as the humor of the moment suited. At such times I saw surrounding objects only in

glimmers and glooms that suggested something brighter or darker than themselves. I would break out into rhapsodies that I should have blushed to have anybody hear, and should have been thought a fool for uttering by any one who had heard them.

Thus I trudged along dreamily. When I knocked at the door of the parsonage, Dr. Stanyan opened it.

"Good morning, Frank; you look happy. You are glad to come and see us?"

"Yes, sir; I ran almost all the way."

"So I see; you look as blown as a flyaway young colt. You are to dine with us—is that it?"

"So mother said if you asked me."

"Well, Mr. Frankness, I do ask you."

The doctor stepped to the hall door leading up stairs as he spoke and called out in a funny kind of loud whisper:

"Marcella!"

It seemed as if the word "Father," that came softly down stairs was the echo of a flute-note, but the substance that followed it was a musical instrument of a much more recondite and complicated construction.

Just a year younger than I was, I then thought and still think she was the most spiritual looking child in the world, in spite of her plumpness and rosiness. I have not time to describe her looks now, and nobody ever will describe her eyes. For the present I will only say that when she stopped, balanced herself on her feet and spoke to me, she put me in mind of an oriole poised on an elm twig and opening a salutation to the morning. I was full of such fancies then, and somehow as I get older they seem to grow upon me, wearing as my life has been.

The doctor took her up and kissed her as if she had been a baby, and set her down again.

"He has come to see you. Go and shake hands with him."

Up she came with those bewitching dimples in her cheeks and on the white hand that she hid in my brown one.

"Where did you get that?" she asked, pointing to a stalk of lobelia cardinalis that adorned my button-hole.

"In the Run; I brought it to you."

She pulled it out and thrust it through her brown hair, with the scarlet petals pointing downward and flecking her forehead with their trembling shadow.

"How do you like us?" she inquired, as if the flower and child were two children.

I was too shy to answer, and the minister helped me out.

"Nonsense; get your hood and go."

"Where am I to go?"

"With *him*, to be sure. Go where he wants to have you, if you can't persuade him that your places are the best."

Her hood was on and we were starting out when her father said:

"Mind, you are to come back at eleven o'clock, Frank, for I am going to show you the school. Stop, you have no watch. I'll lend you mine if you'll take good care of it."

He pulled out a silver-cased watch almost as large as a china saucer, deposited it in my inner pocket, and buttoned up my coat himself.

In a minute Marcella and I were climbing the fence that separated the pasture from the close where the house and garden were. She rolled herself down on the outer side before I could get up to the top; my legs seemed so very long and stiff that morning. Although I was the pilot, I must own that she surpassed me in overcoming obstacles. We hovered about from field to wood, and from wood to runlet, gathering golden-rod and asters not yet in bloom, and everlasting, and whatever else might be called a flower, until we came at length, as if by accident, to a little nook where innumerable fringed gentians cowered under the tall autumnal grass close by the brink of a merry brook. With great generosity, I allowed her to believe that she was the discoverer of this hidden treasure. She clapped her hands with delight, called me to her and then we

fell to gathering the blue purple-tinted bells, until we had filled her apron, and decked the little nymph out with them to her heart's content. When she was fairly fledged she looked at me and said :

"So you don't like Griffin?"

"No ; it's like a cave that I know of in Kinley Hollow ledge. It's dreadfully dark. I've often thought there had been a murder committed in it sometime."

"There was a horrid murder committed in the cave of the Atonement," she replied solemnly. "There never was such a murder before or since. All the other murders in the world put together are not half so wicked. Sit down and let me tell you all about it."

So we sat down on a tuft of sweet flag that grew by the brook, and the little theologian unfolded to me in her child's way the plan of the Atonement. I had never tried to understand it before except in my mother's explanation of Griffin. Marcella made the story interesting, and, what was better, convincing. From this she diverged to other matters—her father, the school, her Latin studies, and I know not what else, closing with a glowing eulogium on the character of William Dart and the beauty of my cousin Charlotte Carew. Time passed unconsciously with us, and what with the flowers, the story, the mosses that we gathered, and the leaves with more shapes and colors than I have names for, we were fast approaching the time limited for our return.

I pulled forth the great watch and cried out in alarm :

"Only ten minutes left, Marcella !"

"Now for a run !" she said, as she fluttered off over the stubble-field.

I followed and soon overtook her. We kept trotting on until we mounted the garden fence together.

"Stop a minute," cried I puffing, "and let me take another look at the watch."

It was just eleven o'clock.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE SCHOOL.

AT the beginning of the present century there were very few academical schools in the country. There existed then an institution better in many respects for the education of young gentlemen than any since adopted, provided the student was willing to avail himself of it. Here and there, in quiet out-of-the-way places, throughout the older States of New England, were to be found clergymen, earnest thinkers and ripe scholars, who made it convenient to piece out a scanty income by taking young men into their families and instructing them in the Greek and Latin classics and in theology. Dr. Stanyan's school was of this type. He was known throughout the country as a man of breeding, learning and eloquence. His enthusiasm was very inspiring to young persons, softened as it was by a lively sensibility, and toned by a masculine strength of will that absorbed other individualities, as a large river bears down with a gentle but irresistible sweep the brooks that come into it. His moods of mind were so sudden in their exhibition that no one could foresee how he would meet an emergency, but everybody felt a prevailing confidence in his ability to do it. He was too childlike to cultivate anything like clerical dignity. Indeed he never appeared to think about himself except as a force that was to fortify the right, or put down the wrong. His manner was an expression of his character, or rather a luminous atmosphere that surrounded it, and reflected it with a clear mellow radiance. He could be nothing other than a gentleman, for he was a man of good family and social culture, and besides there were no dark corners in his soul where his conscience could wander and lose itself.

He only took charge of a limited number of young men, because his house was too small to accommodate more than fifteen or twenty persons aside from his own family, and because he would have none under his charge who were not endowed with a capacity to profit by his

teachings. At the period of which I write there were several students at the school from the Carolinas, Virginia, and a few from the middle States. All the others were from New England. Aside from those who were inmates of his house, there were about as many more who boarded in families near the school, and a few natives of the village and neighborhood who lived with their parents and attended the recitations. There were hardly more than thirty in all. As there were no facilities then such as we have nowadays for traveling, the Southern students remained with the doctor through the year and from year to year, until they were ready to enter college or considered their education completed. Among the other students who were then under his charge was William Dart of North Carolina, a youth about two years older than myself. I had often seen him with Marcella wandering about the fields in search of wild flowers. He was tall, swarthy, with glossy black hair and keen grey eyes, a handsome, audacious fellow who bewitched me, for I had not known Marcella well enough in those shy, primitive days to care what company she kept. How little could I foresee the future that linked us together in one common fate!

"I am glad you are so prompt," said Dr. Stanyan, as he met me at the door. "But how is this, Marcella?"

"I am the river bank where they grow," said the child.

"Well, off with them; get your book and follow on. The class is waiting; come, Frank."

In stalked the doctor holding me by the hand. As soon as he opened the school room door all the pupils rose up and made their obeisance to him. He led me along and seated me on a bench beside his chair. In a minute Marcella came in and took her place in a little chair by itself, but in a line with the boys. There was only one other girl in the room, and this was my pretty cousin, Charlotte Carew. The grave and scholastic manner that Marcella put on contrasted so with the vivacity that had made the morning so pleasant to me, that I felt almost afraid to look at her. As she sat at

the head of the Latin class she was the first to be called up to recite, and did the part of the priestess in the sixth book of the *Æneid* to perfection, leading the hero through the shades of Erebus without once mistaking the way. Ignorant as I was of the theme, I could see that she handled it fearlessly, and that her mind had a directness that I have since had occasion to wonder at even more than I did then. She dealt tenderly with Palinurus, and allayed his anxieties about his poor wandering remains with a warmth of assurance that made me feel quite comfortable about him. I have committed this passage to memory since, and somehow I cherish it more than I do any other in the great epic.

When she had finished she looked at me, I thought, with a kind of pitying triumph in her eyes that made me feel ashamed of myself.

Then the boys took up the text where she had left it and carried along the narrative with various degrees of excellence, but not one of them gave it the elegant rendering that characterized her version. After they had all tried their hand at it, the master read the whole lesson to them, extemporizing a commentary on all the knotty passages, and moving about among the Stygian shades with as earnest a look as father *Æneas* himself. It seemed to me that he must have believed every word of it, doctrinal as some of it was, and opposed to everything taught by him in his theology and from the pulpit. The Greek class was small, consisting of about ten of the older scholars. That in divinity came last. In this recitation every student was allowed to start any objections that he liked, however skeptical they might be, and defend them by such arguments as he could muster. It was refreshing to see the master scatter these controversial legions and drive them one after another from the field. He used the battle axe rather than the sword of the dialectician, and made a sad wreck of the helmets and breastplates of his antagonists. He never dodged a blow aimed at him. He hammered away at Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Bolingbroke and the whole crowd of uncandid trivial

imitators of those champions without remorse. He was just what he looked to be, a man of main strength, who, though he understood the use of every kind of weapon, liked best a close grapple.

He had a way of explaining the paradoxes scattered through the Old and New Testament, and which have so staggered the mediocrity of literalists. This facility was owing to the fact that Dr. Stanyan was in this respect a sort of Hebrew himself, and saw the truths that were obscure to others at a glance, and with an intensity that disdained slow processes of explanation. But when he found it necessary to make out the steps by which he had reached his conclusions he did it in lines of fire. After he had made the way plain, he could embellish it with all the enchantments of light, shade and perspective, and clothe it with verdure and flowers as nature does a landscape. When one of these fits of inspiration came upon him, his eye took the inner light that a poet's does, and his cheek—which was always of a warm hue—would glow with crimson. I shall never forget the impression made on me, child as I was, by his way of representing the humanity of Christ as distinct from His attributes of Deity, and the embodiment in Him of all the higher moral traits that belong to the race without distinction of age, sex, country or external condition. Nor can I ever forget how he contrasted the examples of history and the expressions of Art with the grandeur and perfection of this one short life—a life which cast into the shade the ideals of the great and good of all ages, a life to be seen only in the atmosphere of Heaven.

After the class was dismissed he pulled me up to him and whispered:

"Now, Frank, go home. You are to come to-morrow at nine o'clock and begin—and when you have put your hand to the plow what then?"

"I am not to look back," I said, blushing.

He saw my embarrassment and asked:

"What do you want to know?"

"What I am to come for, sir."



"To school to be sure. Will that suit?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good-bye."

I went home in a state of bewilderment. This was the first word I had heard about it.

My introduction to the school inaugurated for me a new era in my life. I soon became deeply interested in my studies, and was inspired with such a lively emulation that I readily mastered the elements of the Latin and Greek languages, and made considerable proficiency in the mathematics. I was not more than a year and a half in bringing myself up to a standard of scholarship superior to that of any other person of my age in the school except Marcella, who spent much of her leisure time in helping me to overtake her. She became very intimate with my mother as she grew older, and spent a good share of the vacations at our house. The long winter evenings and the fresh summer mornings were occupied in earnest application, and our rambles about Kinley Hollow Brook had a tinge of thought and purpose in them not usual in persons of our age. From her superiority in classical attainments she had acquired a powerful ascendancy over me. Though a year younger, she seemed much older than I, and from looking up to her as a teacher I fell into the way of regarding her as an ideal quite beyond my reach.

At the end of three years she was better prepared for college than I was, and she had grown up into a shapely and beautiful girl sixteen years old, while I was an under-sized youth of seventeen, in appearance and self-estimation nothing but a boy. I cannot say when I first began to love Marcella, but long before this her presence had become so necessary to my happiness that I looked forward to the college examination, that was to be the initial point of a path in which I was to travel alone, with many a sigh of despondency.

At last the dreaded hour arrived. I took leave of her with tears which she requited with smiles and

words of encouragement like those of an older sister who had delegated her ambition to me. The college terms for the first three years of the course were wearisomely long, and the vacations when they were over appeared in the retrospect only to have had a beginning. My happiness was a good deal impaired by the attentions that William Dart had begun to bestow upon Marcella. How they were received I could not make out, but the discovery of his passion marks the commencement of the coldness between us that ended as the reader will learn in the subsequent pages.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CAREWS.

JUST across the street that led past Dr. Stanyan's door there stood an old brick house with a wide green lawn in front, shaded by clumps of maple trees that had outlived several generations of dwellers on that pleasant slope, and had, before the erection of the edifice that now adorned it, sheltered a more humble habitation. As there were so many of them, these maples had associated themselves according to the manner of men in our day, and so faithfully held up one another's arms that in spite of the fearful ice storms that swept the hill in winter, and that would have splintered their brittle arms had they stood alone, they had kept their vast frames unbroken in their age, and still held in mid air their globes of green as perfect as in their youth. The mansion was large and venerable looking for a country house of that day. The property had been in the hands of the Carews nobody could tell how long. It had been associated with wealth and aristocratic seclusion in the minds of the neighboring farmers for more than a century. It had old furniture in it, brought over from England, quaint dresses hidden away in worm-eaten trunks, cabinets of curiosities, maps and pedigrees, and old

folios with the other lumber that time heaps up in the houses of rich families.

The present proprietor had inherited with the estate the mortgages that his father and grandfather had spread over it ; and on coming into possession found it necessary to put his pride in his pocket and turn his collegiate education to some practical account. He had left Yale with clustering honors, and afterward decorated himself with additional laurels in France and Germany. He evinced in early youth a keen desire to look into the mysteries of the physical sciences, and especially to explore the hidden springs of life, and analyze the diseases which divert it from its channels or dry up its currents. His powers were not so closely reined in by the understanding as to prevent his groping about in the hiding places of alchemy and taking excursions into the nebulous regions of astrology. With all this latitude of imagination he had such a contempt for religious credulity that he was apt to go to the extreme of looking at everything in the dry light of skepticism. All the impersonations of religion were to him so many spectral forms of things existing only in a diseased imagination, crossed and balked in its strivings after the infinite. He presented the best example that I have ever known of a nature perverted by the remorseless literalism taught in my youth by the theologians of New England, who wove entangling webs for us before we were born, and tightened their meshes around our limbs before they hardened into manhood.

Such demands were made upon him to believe that which his reason rejected, that he had come to doubt everything except the evidence of his senses. He had been soured too by pecuniary difficulties, and by the loss of his wife, my father's sister, a sprightly and beautiful woman, who died about two years after his marriage, leaving to his care an infant daughter, to whom he gave the name of Charlotte, out of respect to the memory of her mother, and upon whom he concentrated his affections with an intensity that I have never

known equaled. Not able, as I have said, to lead a life of leisure, he turned his attention to the practice of medicine, and soon won an extensive reputation throughout the country. His analytical acuteness enabled him to discover at a glance the nature and stage of the most recondite diseases, and his aptitude for seeing family characteristics and individual idiosyncrasies was so subtle that his rapid conclusions carried with them the authority of divinations. To all councils of doctors he was summoned far and near. When he approached the bedside of the patient, without feeling the pulse or asking a question, he seemed to look through the shattered mechanism lying prostrate before him, as if it had been in a glass case, and fix his eye at once upon the very wheel that was clogged. At such times he would not open his lips until his opinion was asked by those who stood by breathless with anxiety to hear it. Then, without taking advantage of the investigations of any one present, he would speak, not with doubtful phrase, but with the imperiousness of an oracle.

This fearlessness of being contradicted by the future disclosures of the case, and a certain fierceness that lurked in his eye, helped to enforce the acknowledgment of a superiority in him which would not have been accorded to any other member of the profession. The less he cared for the opinion of the brotherhood the greater value they set upon his. If, as seldom happened, his diagnosis proved to be incorrect, he admitted his mistake frankly, without attempting to make others responsible for it. His brother doctors requited this manliness by never laying any blame to him. If the sick man died, human skill, they said, could not have saved him.

In social life Dr. Carew was a passionate and at the same time a genial man. He had a raciness of humor, and a biting elasticity of wit, that were irresistibly entertaining. Those who had the worst of it to-day could not resist the temptation to renew the contest to-morrow, though they felt that the odds were against them.

He was forty years old when Charlotte was born. She had grown up as motherless girls usually do, without the help of those motherly assiduities that tone down the wildness of the child into the calm of the woman. She was of the same age as Marcella and as unlike her as could be. She was a slender, shapely blonde with blue eyes sparkling with animation and self-will; and in her look, motion and air as proud as if she had never known allegiance to any one. Indeed she never had acknowledged any to her father. She had ruled him from the moment that he laid her mother down in the grave. He had clothed her in the drapery of the memory that he loved until she had become as sacred as if she had been an inhabitant of another world. There was a blind adoration in his love for this child that took from him all power of discrimination. He did not seem to be aware that she had a fault or weakness in common with mortals. When at home he would watch her with a wistfulness that was painful to witness, and when absent he often imagined her with him and talked to her as if she had been bodily present.

The only person who could exercise any control over Charlotte was Dr. Stanyan, but his influence was personal, and in his absence she threw off all restraint. He had undertaken the task of educating her, and had kept her as nearly as he could in the same track with Marcella, but only at a mortifying distance behind. Charlotte was as unclassical as a wood-pigeon and lived in the open-air like a humming-bird. Except Marcella, she had no female companion, and though they were fast friends there was not much in common between them. Dr. Carew had contributed a little to his daughter's wild stock of learning, if such a jumble as she had gathered up could be so denominated. He had taught her German, and she both read and spoke it as well as her father did. She rambled on either in his company or alone through endless mazes of fable, and passed no one could tell how much time, in enchanted glens and mountain caverns. In the large library she was queen of a shadowy realm. She was not a stranger to the

healing art and spent much of her time in ministering to the wants of poor sick people in the neighborhood. Altogether Charlotte was a greater mystery than her father.

Three years of our college course had now elapsed and the long summer vacation had come.

As Dart had no other home in the North he returned with me to our village at the close of every term, and resumed his old place in the family of Dr. Stanyan.

I was welcomed by my mother more as if I had been a baby than a young man about to enter upon his career as a senior.

She and Haco, the old Newfoundland dog, were the only members of the family at home to receive me. Both were very extravagant in their demonstrations of joy.

"Your father is in the south meadow with the hay-makers," my mother said, as soon as she could get breath to speak.

At the word off started the dog, clearing the fences at a bound, and heading toward the locality indicated.

In half an hour he came back, dragging my father along by the skirt of his coat, a prisoner under arrest. It was amusing enough to see the brute as he came back, tugging away at the tall farmer, who was at once laughing and scolding in a tone that the dog understood quite as well as we did. I ran out and met them in the door yard.

"There, you rascal, get away," shouted my father. "You have torn my trowsers off my legs, and now you must be at my coat. Get down, I say."

Haco kept his hold steadily until he delivered his captive to me with an expression of triumph in his bright brown eyes and a flap of his silken ears that meant more than words.

"Glad to see you, Frank, glad enough. Mary, do you see how he has grown. (Be quiet, I say.) Tall—tall—what has given you such a start, boy? But you are pale. Hay-making will cure that. (Hush up now, you water-rat.) What are you crying for, mother?"

What else he and my mother and I said and did I don't remember, but I believe the dog behaved as wisely as any of us, and there was no end of his capering and cutting up.

I was tired and slept soundly that night, but not so profoundly as to keep me from dreaming. Marcella was the apparition that haunted my slumber.

When I awoke the sunlight was glaring in through the window.

## CHAPTER V.

### A RIDDLE.

THE next evening I called at Dr. Stanyan's. William and Marcella were together when I entered the parlor. At a glance I felt sure that something had happened between them. He was taciturn and evidently disconcerted at my unexpected appearance. Her cheek was colorless and her features were more mature and womanly than I had ever seen them. The change seemed not the work of months but of years.

With surprising tact she soon rallied, and with her spirits the glow came back to her cheeks. Yet, owing to the determined silence of William, the conversation soon flagged, and after several awkward attempts to renew it, I arose to take my leave.

"Stay a minute," she said, "I wish to propose a walk for us to Kinley Hollow to-morrow morning. You are to come for me, and Mr. Dart is to go for Charlotte. I wish to talk about gentians and golden rods since it is too early to gather any. Mr. Frank, what do you say?"

"I will go."

Of course William was caught. Whether he wished it or not he was obliged to consent. When I took my leave, Marcella followed me into the entry, and before I had shut the door I saw the glimmer of her white dress as she glided up stairs. Why had she embraced that opportunity to leave William alone?

## CHAPTER VI.

## DURISSUS.

MARCELLA and I sat on a fragment of grey rock crowning the ledge that rises to the westward of Kinley Hollow. We were not more than fifty yards above the water-fall and could see it taking its plunge into the basin below. We could see the fairy rainbow born of the mist that hovered over the pool. We were alone together. Dart and Charlotte, who had been with us but a few moments before, were just visible at a little distance further down the declivity, through a tuft of laurel bushes. A clump of white pines waved over us and moaned a response to the music of the cascade as it came up to us repeated by the echoes of the cliff. Though Dart and Marcella had not been very communicative during the morning, we had all taken our lunch together before we separated. It was mid-day. The voices of the hay-makers, softened by distance, just reached us. The hum of the insect was scarcely heard above the din of the waterfall. We sat there a long time weaving out the silken threads of the past—a many-colored web, in which I became so hopelessly entangled that I had not even a desire to extricate myself. All surrounding things were merged in Marcella. To me she was the centre of the universe.

What stages led to the disclosure or what words were employed in it, I cannot recall; but in some bewildered way I contrived to tell how faithfully I loved her. She looked at me with an expression of bright-eyed wonder that I shall never forget.

“Frank!” she said, “I am afraid you are going to rob me of the best friend I have in the world except my father.”

She saw that she was trampling my heart beneath her feet. She caught my hand and said with great energy:

“Don’t repeat it, Frank, I cannot listen to it. Forgive me for telling you the truth. Promise me not to repeat it.”

“I promise whatever you demand, Marcella. If you



bid me plunge headlong down this ledge, I should do it."

"I bid you not to plunge but to climb higher—higher!" she cried. "If I cannot follow, I will yet applaud. I am only ambitious for you. Do not let this promise stand between your confidence and mine. Pledge me this too."

"I will try to fall back into the old way, Marcella; it will be hard."

She threw her arms about my neck and kissed me as if we had been children again.

"My brother," she said, with swimming eyes.

"Yes, Marcella, but tell me one thing."

"Anything that it is fit you should know."

"Something happened this morning between you and William. Do you treat us both alike?"

"Don't ask me that. Nothing has happened between him and me that you ought to know, and nothing that I ought to tell. If I ever tell it to anyone it shall be to you. Will that content you?"

"It must, since I can have nothing more," I said, with a sigh.

The silence that followed was irksome to her.

"Come, Frank," she said hurriedly, "William and Charlotte will think we have deserted them. Let us go to them."

I peered through the pine leaves and saw our companions at the bottom of the glen, under an oak by the brook. They seemed to be in earnest conversation. Our screen was so near the place where we stood that they could not see us. Slowly I followed Marcella who was already creeping along the rift between the rock where we had sat and the one next below. She was three or four yards in advance of me, and when she came to the bottom of this cleft she jumped off and disappeared. Not supposing the descent to the next landing could be more than two or three feet, I was startled at losing sight of her, and followed with a palpitating heart. As I looked over the edge of the shelf I found she was not on the stairs next below, but, near

the spot where her footprints were still visible, in the green and yellow moss was a huge rattlesnake, lashing the air with that sharp and stunning admonition so terrible to human ears.

In my precipitation I had nearly leapt upon the head of the hideous creature as it lay coiled in its dingy shields at my feet, its angry eyes flashing with that venomous courage for which this reptile is distinguished above all others. Even as I descended I struck it a mortal blow with the knotted stick that I held in my hand, and then leapt to the next platform of rock about five feet lower down.

Here I found Marcella lying partly upon her side in the fern, with her face averted from me, and drops of blood trickling from her left temple that had been bruised against some hard substance in her fall. My first impression was that she had leaped upon the snake and been bitten by it, and in the agony of her suffering and terror had flung herself down upon the lower table of the rock where she now lay motionless. I flew to her and lifted her up.

"Oh, Marcella! look at me, speak to me," I said, wildly.

I tried in vain to rouse her. Had she fainted? Was she dead? Then I cried out in alarm to William and Charlotte. When they came up Charlotte knelt down by Marcella's side, caught her in her arms, wiped the drops of blood from her face, and after a vain effort to rouse her to consciousness, turned to me, and gathered such facts as she could from my hurried and confused statement. Then she whispered to William:

"Go for my father. Tell him to drive up the road yonder to the nearest point, and then leave the chaise and come down the glen on foot. Frank and I will carry her down the rocks to the oak. You must find Dr. Stanyan, too. Stop! You look wild. Do you understand me? Tell him what my fears are," she added, pointing upward to the spot where the dead monster lay. He nodded and started off, climbing the rifts with great celerity and soon disappearing.

"Now, Frank," said Charlotte, "there is not a moment to lose. We must lift her up and carry her down to the brook. Every breath may be a lifetime to her now. Hush! she opens her eyes."

"Where am I and what are you going to do with me?" asked Marcella.

"Don't try to speak, dear," said Charlotte, tenderly but decidedly; "not a word, child. Take her up, Frank. There. Let us each give her an arm and help her over the rough places. Come!"

I lifted Marcella from the ground, and with the aid of Charlotte, I supported her as she made her way down the cliff. At last we reached the brook.

"There, lay her down softly on the grass," said Charlotte. Now, darling, lean your head on me. That's just the way. How do you feel now?"

"My head is whirling round and round," answered Marcella faintly. "I think my heart has stopped beating." As she put her hand to her left side in a feeble listless way, Charlotte whispered:

"Scoop up some water in your hands and let it drip on her head. Quick! there she goes again! That will do. Now on the temple; now on the wrists; now on the hands."

Trembling I took the helpless palms and manipulated them with a feeling that they were too sacred for me to touch.

"This is the way to do it," said Charlotte, reaching out and snatching them from me with more force than gentleness. There was a slight discoloration of the stocking like a blood stain on Marcella's right instep.

"If it has bitten her anywhere it is there," said Charlotte. As she spoke she stripped off the shoe and stocking and examined the wound.

"It is very slight—hardly a scratch," she said eagerly; "still we must act upon the worst belief." She put her lips to the wound and pressed them against it as if they had been a vise. Marcella struggled to release herself.

"Poison—poison," she cried. "If it mixes with your blood it will kill you!"

Charlotte clasped the ankle tight with both hands and continued the operation until her breath failed her, regardless of the remonstrance.

My hat was lying on the ground near by. Pointing to it, Charlotte said:

"Fill that with cool mud from the pool and fetch it to me."

When I came with the hatful she added, "Put the hurt foot to the very bottom of the hat and hold it so as to make it easy for her. Tilt it toward her a little more. So, hold it as it is."

I did as I was told. Marcella soon came to herself just enough to moan in such an unconscious way as almost to drive me mad. The minutes stretched out into eternities as Charlotte and I sat looking now at Marcella, and now at each other.

"It is only to wait, Cousin Frank. We have done all we can do. Oh, the misery of waiting—the misery of it."

She went into a spasm of grief that made me dumb. Tears would not have relieved me. My brain was a globe of fire. At last a whoop came winding down the glen. I answered it.

Soon we heard voices and saw a party of three persons approaching. The gaunt figure of Dr. Carew was the foremost of the group and behind him came Officer Bramble the constable and his louty son Tom with a litter. The doctor's walk was faster than the trot of the other two. He was carrying his broad beaver in his hand and his white hair was flying back from his forehead as the upspringing southern breeze met it. He walked up to the place where we sat and without the least ruffle of countenance listened to our story. When Charlotte told him that she had applied her lips to the wound he shuddered, and for the first time showed emotion.

"You are a mad little fool!" he said. Hastily he drew Marcella's foot from the hat, poured some water

upon it from the brook and examined it. His features relaxed into a smile.

"Impossible!" he said. "It has been more than an hour. Had this brute, overcharged with that devilish venom of his, (as they always are in August), made that mark, there would have been a frightful distension of the instep before this. *She is not bitten!* Her nervous frame has received a terrible shock. The fright and the hurt on the temple would account for the symptoms. I wish I had sight of the reptile."

At these words, Charlotte motioned to Tom Bramble and they both started off up the acclivity without speaking.

From this moment the doctor devoted himself to the work of allaying the nervous irritation of the patient and bringing her back to full consciousness. He bound up the bruise on the temple and administered powerful restoratives. Marcella lay for some minutes, going into little fainting fits and coming out of them at short intervals.

Meanwhile Charlotte came back followed by Tom, who was dragging the snake behind him attached to a cord slipped around its neck in a noose. The doctor arose and inspected the reptile, turning it over, measuring its length and thickness and counting its rattles with the eye of a naturalist.

"*Crotalus durissus!* banded, yellowish vertebral line—sides same color; length five feet, circumference four inches, twelve rattles—a most malignant and deadly dragon. Get away, you lout, and let the beast alone. If you get one of his pricklers in that handsome thumb of your's it will be bigger than it is now."

This latter remark was addressed to Tom Bramble, who was making himself quite too familiar with the snake.

"Step a leetle further off an' you'll see better," said Oliver Bramble to his son.

Marcella's face was deadly white. The dimples were gone from her cheek and the one in her chin looked like a depression made by a sculptor's chisel in

stainless marble. Now and then she opened her eyes and closed them wearily, pressing her fingers over them.

Kneeling beside her the doctor watched her so intently that he did not see Dr. Stanyan and William Dart as they came up and stood motionless by him. Dr. Stanyan was almost as pale as his daughter. He was both father and mother to Marcella. Her life was more than his to him. He stood there in the shadow of the old oak breathlessly waiting. His eye was full of subdued light.

Suddenly a fresh breeze rustled in the leaves overhead and lifted the dark waves of Marcella's hair and fanned her cheek.

"Dr. Carew," said the father.

At the sound of his name the physician rose and turned his grey eye full upon the speaker.

"Without asking, you shall know all that I know," said he. "She jumped from the rock and startled the crotalus. This set his rattles going. In her fright she fell to the next landing and hit her temple against a tree or some other hard substance. Fear and the hurt together gave her a dreadful shock."

"And she was not bitten?"

"No."

"Thank God."

"Wait a minute, Stanyan. If I could see a little color in the cheek. Ha! there it is, a point of warm light. Good! Wait another minute. Yes, pulse still wavering but stronger."

Dr. Carew rubbed his knuckles and palms together and laughed as I have seen women do in a way hardly to be distinguished from crying.

"Thank God," again said the minister. As he spoke Marcella opened her eyes but instantly held up her hands before them, as a shade of disappointment flitted over her face.

"Father," she said, in a feeble voice, and then added: "I am sure I heard him speak, but I cannot see him. Nothing but shadows moving about. I won-

der if I am dead. Where am I?" she asked, pit-  
eously.

"Not dead. You are better now. You will soon be  
well," replied the physician. "Do you know me?"

"Dr. Carew. Yes, but what ails me?"

"You fainted, child; never mind. Here is your  
father."

Dr. Stanyan knelt down and kissed his daughter's lips.

"They are warm," he whispered, turning toward the  
doctor.

"Don't show any emotion," said Dr. Carew. "There  
is something besides *brain* vitality in the girl after all.  
The forces are rallying. Those nervous centres seemed  
miles away, but we have reached them. It was not  
the *crotalus*. Never fear that. Strange that this fel-  
low should crawl about with a drop of greenish-yellow  
albumen in his head, that no *other* head on earth can  
carry, or find a neutralizer for! If he could strike at  
the universal principle of life (which, by the way, no  
philosopher could ever yet find), he would annihilate  
it. Specifics can't checkmate him. Nothing but stimu-  
lants will over-ride him, let the experimentalists say  
what they will. I am even doubtful if stimulants will  
do it. It is like being dropped into a whirlpool. If you  
have strength enough to swim out of it very well, very  
well; if not, you must go down. But never mind. I  
say it is *not the crotalus*, I could take my oath on that,"  
and Dr. Carew looked around upon our circle with a  
defiant air as if he invited contradiction.

Of course we were only too happy to acquiesce in his  
opinion.

"I can safely say that we have passed the crisis," re-  
sumed the doctor. "It was a dreadful shock. I am  
not often so communicative. Had there been a  
council of stupid doctors at my elbow I would have  
held my tongue. But, for all the strange anomalous  
doctrines you preach, I like you, Stanyan, and the girl  
is just a darling, and as brave as a lion. She fights  
death with a grand instinctive force. I don't love her  
any the less for that. Life hates Death."

"And will triumph over it at last," said the minister.

"In this instance let us hope so," responded the doctor. "But there is damp in the spray of the brook. It is time for us to set forth. Come, Oliver."

"Fetch the settle, Tom," said the constable.

The great lumbering fellow came up with it and placed it beside Marcella. Then Dr. Carew and her father lifted her up and laid her on it and our party moved slowly up the glen toward the road. When we came to the doctor's chaise she was transferred to it. The ride home seemed to revive her. When I took my leave of her she gave me her hand and smiled cheerfully upon me.

I went home across the fields. My brain was in such a blaze of excitement that I was not even conscious of external objects. It was late when I went to bed that night. Sleep was out of the question with me. I was now for the first time fully aware of the complete possession that this girl had taken of me. It seemed as if my unrequited passion had sprung up suddenly in my path like another serpent to devour me. I could not compose myself to think connectedly upon any subject. The events of the day whirled round and round in circles, and the evil consequences that might still flow from them, mingled themselves with my first recollections of her—the hours of study, the interval of sport, her early impetuosity, her later sedate thoughtfulness, her shyness toward William, her frankness with me—all so dear—all so distracting. Had William declared his love for her? Were not his coldness and her cordiality toward me parts of a thin disguise? Why had she denied me the consolation of sharing her secret? What was I to think, how was I to know? How indeed could I hope to solve the mysteries of her heart, when I could not comprehend the source or calculate the swiftness of the current that was rushing through my own?

Thus hour after hour I tossed from side to side, and clasped my feverish forehead in an agony of jealous



suspense, and waited for the day. Would it ever come? If so, what fate would it bring to the suffering girl, or what dark scroll of my own future would it unroll? My old enemies, Prometheus and the Vulture, were no longer mythical to me. That night was like one of those which the rock-imprisoned god called an eternity. Yet, like all things earthly, it came to an end.

## CHAPTER VII.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO MY MOTHER.

I HAVE already stated one or two incidents, showing how thoroughly my father's character had been moulded after the severest models of puritanism. His mind ran in ruts that had been marked out for him by Howe and his compeers, and had been worn deeper by the feet of thousands of pilgrims who had traveled in them. He was not without some joyous moods of temper, but they were occasional, and served only to shed a lurid glare over the rugged surface of his nature. He was a Federalist in politics, and divided his prejudices between Thomas Jefferson and his adherents, on the one hand, and Episcopacy on the other. He used to say that by the Grace of God a democrat *might* go to heaven, but he was not clear that such a thing was possible for an Episcopalian. For several weeks he had been more bitter than ever in his denunciation of written prayers, and all the ritualistic demonstrations of what he called popery—had denounced Sabbath-breaking with more than apostolic authority, and had sent home to my maternal grandfather the borrowed Prayer Book, Shakespeare and Robinson Crusoe, to the great grief of my mother, who yet bore the affront without remonstrance. I felt the injustice of this conduct, but my will had so long been subjected to his that I hardly dared to question the justice of anything that he said or did. What passed between him and my mother in my absence I cannot say. She often wept when he was away, but steadily refused to make me a

confidant of her sufferings. Besides, my own personal matters had so occupied my mind that I had devoted little time to the consideration of our domestic affairs ; but I had a presentiment that some dreadful calamity was impending.

Early in the morning after the accident narrated in the last chapter, my father burst into my chamber in great agitation.

"Your mother has left the house," he said hurriedly. "I have searched the whole place over and cannot find her."

"When did you miss her?" I asked in alarm.

"At day-break when I awoke. She had complained during the night of headache ; she has not been well for some weeks. Last evening she was much distressed about Marcella. She may have gone to the village to ask after her ; I will go to Dr. Stanyan's, and you must hurry off to Mr. Barker's.

"Is Haco at home?" I asked.

"I have not thought of him."

He went to the window and called, but the dog did not come.

"He is with her," I said.

I was soon ready and my father and I took the separate ways indicated. My grandfather Barker's farm joined ours and occupied a mile square of beautiful land to the south of us, embracing the meadows through which flowed the river formed by the confluence of Kinley Hollow Brook and the larger stream that came down from the northwest. The house, an old fashioned structure with knee roofs and dormer windows, stood fronting a cross-road leading from our Ridge to a point half a mile south of the village, and nestled in a lawn shaded with apple trees and sloping gracefully down to the river. This was my mother's birthplace. She had a fond love for it, and my earliest recollections were associated with her, in many a morning and evening visit to haunts consecrated in the spring-time of her life, by thoughts and experiences that I was too young to share. How often had she be-

waited in her sweet melancholy way, the loss of a brother and two sisters long since laid in the grave. Her mother was Mary Davies, granddaughter of John Davies, one of our later English emigrants. The family had no sympathy with Puritanism, and still adhered to the Prayer Book, although there was no Episcopal Church near enough for them to worship at.

Mr. Barker was the son of an Episcopal clergyman, and had strong denominational predilections, so that my mother had never forgotten the simple prayers that contented themselves with asking God for just what the petitioner wanted, without discursively amplifying upon the wonders of His providence and the beauties of His creation. My father claimed that Mr. Barker (as he always called his wife's father), read the prayers because he was too indolent to make any for himself, and that he had not confidence enough in his own piety to frame it into words. Since the old Prayer Book had been sent home, my mother always opened and read it whenever she visited her father's house, and I more than once detected her examining the record of births and deaths that was kept in it, because the great Bible had been lost. Once she slyly pointed out to me on the fly-leaf a memorandum in the handwriting of John Davies, the emigrant, in which he described his American retreat as a "valley infested by rattlesnakes, wolves and Puritans." My father never forgave that Prayer Book for the savage pleasantries of the original possessor, who had been dead a hundred years, and I think this was the principal cause of its banishment from our house.

Notwithstanding my father's tyranny, my mother was certainly very fond of Dr. Stanyan, whose spirituality could find nourishment even in a book of printed prayers. Indeed, the minister had written and published a little collection of prayers for heads of families, in which he had omitted to make mention of himself at all except as a needy sinner.

As I hurried on toward my grandfather Barker's that morning, I occupied my mind in running over the per-

sonal history of my mother from the time when I was four years old. It took, in my imagination, the form of a lovely horizon, tinged with faint luminous clouds, with here and there a darker fleck. The part that seemed nearest to my present consciousness was more in shadow than the rest of the picture.

It is indeed true, I said to myself, a change has come over her of late. She is as tender and loving as ever, but more like one dead than living. I pine for her when she is with me as if I did not see her and could never make her real to me again.

A vague impression that had long been deepening took shape in my mind. She loved my father, and he seemed as fond of her as his austere disposition would allow, but could there be any real unity between them? Were his sensibilities fine enough to reach hers, and blend with them? Could his nature reflect the lineaments of hers? Was her softness the counterpart of his rugged vigor or did it shrink, as I sometimes did, from the contact? He has driven her to despair, I said to myself. In my rebellious heart I looked upon him as a tyrant, and with a boy's chivalry fancied that I had wrongs to redress for her as well as for myself. With these reflections I reached the quaint old country house. Mr. Barker was sitting near the door reading his morning prayers and his wife was kneeling by his side. When I say that he was a large man, about seventy years old, with an oval head, and features of that most marked type called Roman, a very swarthy complexion, large light blue eyes and a profusion of long white silky hair; and that she was about five years younger, a slender looking blonde, faded except for her hair that had scarcely a sprinkle of gray, and of such a cast of countenance and expression as devotees delight to transfigure into saints—I have given a hasty outline of their appearance, sufficient for my present purpose. Neither of them saw me, and I looked at them with a veneration heightened by the tones of the deep rich voice as it rhythmically measured out the simple petition that had been made, not by any one man for any one

occasion; but had been rolled along through the ages, gathering beauty and smoothness at every remove, as an ocean pebble does in its migrations from shore to shore. In vain I looked through the door and the open window to catch a glimpse of my mother. It was evident that she was not in the room, and if she had been there it was equally evident from the placid faces of the worshippers that there was nothing in her manner or appearance to excite anxiety. I was not surprised, therefore, at the alarm manifested by them when I related what had happened.

"What can the boy mean?" said the old gentleman. "Just what I told you, John," said my grandmother bursting into tears, "I knew weeks ago that it was coming. It is no fault of yours, and considering what happened to your poor grandfather, you have got along with it very well; but blood is blood and humors are humors, and if it has come upon her, you know Mary couldn't help it."

Any allusion to the subject interdicted except when he chose himself to introduce it, ruffled Mr. Barker's temper. His grandfather had committed suicide, his father had attempted it, and he himself had given his "little wife" as he used to call her, a world of trouble, during their married life, by exhibitions of the hereditary taint, mortifying enough to a proud, quiet woman. He had been from early manhood subject to periodical attacks of a character so strange that some of the neighbors thought him insane. Each paroxysm was signalized by a fit of mental excitement followed by a dreadful depression of spirits with a marked interval free from both these extremes. These exhibitions occurred sometimes every year and sometimes only once in two or three years. The exalted moods, which he called his "heroics," usually came on in August and lasted about two months. Their effect upon his mind was not unlike that of intoxicating liquors upon a highly excitable nervous temperament. He was talkative, aggressively witty and had such powers of exaggerated expression that everybody was glad to

keep on the right side of him. He was very fond of extravagant horses and out-of-the-way fanciful vehicles such as sober people never used in those days. He had a passion for auctions, or "vandues" as he called them, and would ride miles to attend one. His house and all his out-buildings were filled with articles bought at these sales. He would start off suddenly from home without notifying any member of the family of his intended absence and return at midnight, rouse up the whole household and insist on having a hot supper prepared for him. On these occasions he usually brought home a deal of rubbish that he could not turn to account. He was at such times very overbearing and regardless of the rights or convenience of others. Among his other accomplishments he was a controversial writer. I have known him awaken my grandmother in the dead of the night and insist on reading a political tract to her which he had written, and go into a fit of anger because she fell asleep during the entertainment. Although an Episcopalian he was an intense hater of democracy and of Jefferson, its great standard bearer. He was a passionate lover of Shakespeare and could recite from memory whole pages, especially of the Comedies. "The tragedies," he said, "were too suggestive; no Barker ought ever to read them."

The depression which followed his season of elevation he used to liken to a fall from the top of a tree into a well. Then would come on the normal interval. This he ordinarily spent in practicing a rigid economy to make up for his recent prodigality, and in selling his horses and inanimate things which he very properly called his "trumpery." At the time of my present visit he was in a fit of depression.

"It is not what you think it is," he said rising and walking to and fro across the room. "It is the tyranny of Everett's religion. He has frightened Mary to death. It is nothing but doctrines from morning till night. It would drive any woman mad. He will go mad, too, by and by," added the old gentleman pointing to me.

"I shall indeed if I can't find my mother," I said, clinching my hands. "Have you seen Haco?"

"No, stop a minute. I'll tell you where your mother is, or where it would be just like her to be. It may not be so bad after all. You have heard about Marcella Stanyan."

I nodded.

"Well, Mary couldn't sleep and didn't wish to disturb Everett and so slipped away and went to the village. The dog followed her. I've known her sympathies carry her further than that."

"It must be so," said Mrs. Barker.

"So my father thinks. He has gone there to look for her, but I can't make up my mind to believe it," I answered despondingly.

I left the house and wandered toward the river. The meadow had lately been mown, and the new crop of grass was wet with dew. When I reached the bank of the stream I saw footprints. They were freshly made and evidently those of a child or a woman. They pointed down the stream. With breathless anxiety I followed them. When I came to a bend in the river I saw the tracks of a dog leading diagonally across the meadow. A horrible suspicion took possession of me. The curve of the river was very decided here, and in the concave of the crescent was a pool more than six feet deep screened by a clump of elm trees that drooped low and almost touched the water. The ground sloped a little toward the west, and, at a distance of about a hundred yards, between the trunks of the trees I caught a glimpse of Haco with his eyes fixed upon the ground. As soon as I emerged from a tuft of alders that grew close on the brink, the dog saw me, ran toward me a little way, and then returned to the place where I had first discovered him. As I came up he was standing guard over my mother, who sat on the grass ghastly pale, with her wet hair clinging about her face, and her clothes dripping. Her feet were bare and almost touched the pool. Her gown was torn in several places. The rents in it were evidently made by Haco's teeth.

As soon as she saw me she rose, tottered toward me, threw her arms about my neck and kissed me sobbingly. I assisted her to walk to a little grassy mound made by the struggle of the elm roots to reach the surface. On this she sat down close by the water. Haco watched her with joyous solicitude, placing himself between her and the pool, and regarding her with a glance of stern authority. For some time I could not speak, and my mother, after the first gush of feeling was over, sat with drooping eyes as if ashamed or afraid to look at me.

"What brought you here, mother?"

She turned her face from me and made no reply. Taking her hand in mine, I persisted :

"Did you fall into the water?"

She preserved an obstinate silence.

"Do you forget your poor lonesome boy? Do you want to run away and leave Frank, Mary?"

I had called her Mary when I was a child, and in our loving moods I had petted her ever since in that way. I suppose there was never such a spoiled child as I was. She trembled and her cheeks were flooded with tears. She turned about and stifling her emotions by a strong effort said :

"I did run away from you, Frank. It was not an accident. I jumped into the water to drown myself. You need not look at me, Haco ; I thank you for what you did. I forgot *you*, my baby !" she added, throwing her arms about me again and clasping me to her heart. "I forgot you in that bad moment ; I forgot how I nursed and taught you to pray to God, whose goodness in giving you to me has left my heart so thankless and cold. I should have clung to your future and shared your hopes when I had none left of my own. I forgot that you had enough for us both."

I tried to falter out something which her intuitions caught up and answered as if I had distinctly uttered it.

"No, I cannot promise that I will make no further attempts upon my life. Were I to make such a prom-



ise, I might break it. But look ! *he* is coming, and the doctor with him ; I must hide myself."

It was with great difficulty that I restrained her and induced her to return to my grandfather's house. She was very feeble and needed all the aid we could afford her. My father and the doctor carried her into my grandmother's room and laid her on the bed. When Dr. Carew joined us in the parlor I noticed that he was unusually silent and that his face wore a troubled expression. My father and grandfather remained for some time lost in their own thoughts. Mr. Barker walked the room incessantly, with his arms behind him and a large yellow silk handkerchief thrown over his head and falling down upon his shoulders. His manner impressed me so much that my eye followed him constantly. Suddenly he turned and said :

"Doctor, they say there is a venom in my blood that has poisoned at least three generations of us, and now it is feared that it has broken out in the fourth. It is strange that somehow as soon as we Barkers get old enough to think, our thoughts are turned to the best method of putting an end to ourselves. The occupation of our lives is, not to study out the best way of living, but the easiest way of getting rid of life. Now, is there any known cure for this disease?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Stop thinking about it."

"You had better say stop thinking."

"You mean to say that it can't be helped where there is an hereditary predisposition, I suppose. Did you ever meditate such a thing yourself, Mr. Barker?"

"I've thought about it all my life," said my grandfather solemnly.

"Ha !"

"Yes."

"What did you think of it?" enquired the doctor.

"I always thought I shouldn't do it," said Mr. Barker, with a sly twinkle in his eye.

"Sensible man," said Dr. Carew, breaking out into a laugh that began and ended with himself, for this subject was frightful to me, and my father looked like a cast iron man, his features were so rigid.

"It is no laughing matter," said my grandfather, "and I may as well speak out plainly. All the blame is laid to me for being born with a predisposition, as you call it, but the trouble in this case doesn't come from me or my family. *He* is the cause of this calamity," he added, pointing to my father.

"The accusation is unjust and false," said my father, in a white heat of anger. "I do everything in my power to make Mary happy. I read good books and expound difficult texts of Scripture—explain the catechism, and—"

"And freeze her to death with controversial theology, or burn her to a crisp with the fire and brimstone used in the Bible as metaphors," said Mr. Barker fiercely. "You would submit to a bodily test of such torment for a thousand years and enjoy it to substantiate your horrid doctrines. I must own that you have courage. So has a Hindoo when he has made up his mind to suffer. Your very enjoyments would be hell-pains to human nature as God created it and intended it to be. Your Sabbaths darken the house, and your prayers are grim as the mummeries of an Indian priest over a human sacrifice. Nobody can live under such a shadow—least of all a woman. She must either harden into stone, or do as Mary did, go mad. I have borne this a great while, doctor. I knew we had been haunted by this curse and felt as if somehow I was the author of it. Now that the evil stroke has come, I could not hold back any longer. Everett, you are a good-natured fellow at heart, but you are driving us all to the mad-house. Glad as I always am to see you here, I sometimes feel an impulse to drown myself when you come; and if you go on in this way I will do it."

The doctor interrupted him.

"Not too fast, Mr. Barker. Your mind is excited by what has happened. Don't be alarmed. With

good management I believe your daughter will soon recover. You need not cite family precedents to me. I know all about the case. It is true that I am not a fit person to give advice on religious matters. Stanyan would tell you that and give good reasons for it ; but I know something about temperament, and the influence that circumstances have upon sensitive persons. I wish to deal kindly with you as a relative, Mr. Everett," he continued, addressing my father. "Whoever unites his destinies with a woman is bound to respect her individuality. I know little about creeds and nothing of the order of intelligences other than man, nor do I care to follow *him* beyond the limits of this world. My business is to deal with human beings as I find them ; but from long observation I am convinced that more victims have been sacrificed by the tyranny of strong wills over weak ones than ever fell by the hand of the assassin. Now it is evident from the alarm manifested by your wife when she first saw us by the river, that aside from hereditary aptitudes and a weak physical condition, her mind has been wrought upon by some overmastering influence. Who has conjured up this spell I cannot say. If you have done it let me warn you that she is not a fit subject for experiment. A word, a look, may quench the last spark of remaining reason. This is the most subtle disease in the world, and it thrives on this soil. Cotton Mather laid it to the wilderness and to the Devil. I think the devil at the bottom of it is the intermeddling spirit of fanaticism. Be the cause what it may, there are more cases of religious insanity in New England than in any other part of the world containing an equal population. Three-quarters of the afflicted are women. Believe whatever you like, deacon ; make yourself as anxious as you please about the degradation of man, and the miseries of his fallen state ; but let your wife go to heaven in her own way. For the present leave her to the care of her mother. Let her fall back into the associations of childhood ; they work miracles in such cases, especially with women ; let her say and do what

she likes. When I see you again, I will talk to you further on this subject."

With this pungent advice, followed by a few directions given to my grandmother, Dr. Carew took his leave.

After his departure a painful silence again pervaded the house, broken from time to time by despairing exclamations from the invalid.

Mr. Barker kept on his aimless and apparently interminable journey backward and forward, diagonal and circular, with a haughty melancholy so unassailable that even my father did not venture to attack it. Indeed he was clearly in no belligerent mood. The rigidity of his lips, the controversial glances which were often irritating enough, had given place to a wandering expression as if his eyes were searching in the imperfect light for lost objects. He did not appear to be aware of the presence of any one. Even the incoherent cries that came from the sick chamber, roused, only to plunge him into a deeper abstraction. Was he looking for treasures long buried beneath the rubbish of the past? Did he press his hand against his temples to recall something lovely and half-forgotten, or to banish some spectre that was only too palpably present?

At last the gate creaked. I heard footsteps upon the gravel, and then a light tap on the casement of the open door.

"Walk in!" said Mr. Barker in the old country fashion, without looking up.

Dr. Stanyan entered and brought a streak of sunshine into the house. My grandfather, who felt a deep respect for him, and who was in the act of turning about for a new adventure across the room, paused long enough to extend his hand and say:

"Welcome, sir."

My father arose and greeted his pastor with hearty loyalty.

Dr. Stanyan never wasted words in preliminaries. His look was earnest, but free from that mock serious-

ness that people who have a reputation for exalted goodness usually carry with them into such places.

"I wish to ask you a few questions," he said to my father. "Shall I do it here?"

"Frank and I can withdraw," said Mr. Barker.

My father put out his hand to stop us.

"No, we are all deeply interested in what he may say. I would rather have you remain."

"And I would rather go," said the old gentleman. "The devil will tempt me to say something about you or myself, and I have said already what I am sorry for."

"Don't go, I entreat you. I have something to say, too," cried my father.

I sat down and my grandfather resumed his walk. Dr. Stanyan proceeded:

"How long has your wife been in a disordered state of mind?"

"It must be a year since I first noticed a change. It came on with sleeplessness and was followed by depression of spirits."

"Has this infirmity grown upon her?"

"For the last year, yes."

"How did her mental dejection exhibit itself?"

"By fits of silence and a disposition to be alone."

"Could you not induce her to throw off this reserve?"

"Sometimes."

"And then what reasons did she give for it?"

"She said it was the wickedness of her own heart; that she was a disbeliever in God—in the divine mission of Christ—in the immortality of the soul. At other times she was in the depths of despair because she had committed the unpardonable sin. She did not remain long in any one mental condition."

"What course did you adopt, Mr. Everett?"

"I tried to convince her of the sin of using such language and cherishing such thoughts. I prayed with her, read to her, and warned her of the wrath of God."

"Did she derive any comfort from that?"

"She grew worse and worse; lately she has refused to go to meeting, and spent her time wandering in the

fields. She justified Sabbath-breaking by the example of our Saviour, who went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath day. I confess that I rebuked her sharply for it."

"As the Pharisees rebuked the Christ," said Mr. Barker.

Dr. Stanyan waved his hand.

"I told you how it would be. I can't help it," said my grandfather.

The minister sat a moment as if trying to solve the difficulties of the case.

"I am afraid you are wrong, Brother Everett. The demands of the Master are very simple. His doctrines are important to be understood, but no two persons will understand them precisely alike in this world. Indeed, it is not certain that any one of His followers has ever understood them all. Certain it is that not one of the disciples, who had the benefit of His society, fully comprehended them until after His death. They were not all declared then. The resurrection of the dead was a shadow. He chose the weak, who could do little more than believe in Him and love Him. Children can do that. The sick who are too feeble to think can do that. Whoever reposes in Him and tries to obey Him, according to the measure of his power, complies with His demands, no matter under what infirmities he labors, of childhood, age, disease or sorrow. *That* is enough. Don't vex yourself or your family with difficult questions, brother. Of all the shining characteristics of Christ's earthly life, His tenderness and indulgence toward women and children are the loveliest. He was most like them in his nature, confiding, sympathetic and gentle. He never overwhelmed His mother, or Mary or Martha with doctrines. A little hint, a delicate admonition, a word, a look, sufficed. 'Thou art careful and troubled about many things. But Mary hath chosen that good part.' Remember the annunciation to the woman of Samaria — 'The day is coming and now is when neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father.' Nor could the spikenard be wasted that was

poured out upon Him. The mite given by the poor woman was priceless. 'She hath done what she could.' By His hand the outcast was lifted from her degradation. 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.' 'Suffer little children to come.' 'Of such is the kingdom.' Not only was He King, Legislator and Judge; He was a Physician; a healer of bodies as well as souls. All souls were diseased by sin; some by maladies growing out of their union with diseased bodies. These latter disturbances afforded a beautiful opportunity for the exercise of the healing art. He grasped the hand of the afflicted. As His presence attracted them, so it drove away their tormentors. Let His spirit dwell in you. One thing more: I cannot leave this house until I see peace resting upon it. Mr. Barker, you do not attend upon my ministrations; perhaps you don't believe in them. If not, I cannot blame you, for I have little confidence in them myself. But I feel that you believe in Christ. Shake hands with your daughter's husband. There will be no doctrinal or denominational differences in the other world. The church militant cannot survive the ravages of death. The Bible itself will be but dust and ashes in the clearer light of Heaven."

"Everett," said my grandfather with emotion, "there's my hand; forgive me."

"The blame is all on my side," said my father, weeping like a child.

In the dawn of this reconciliation, the spiritual physician departed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HELL OF THE IMAGINATION.

THE night wore away drearily enough. I was too much agitated and distressed in mind to sleep, and so did not think of going to bed. My father lay down upon a sofa in the parlor and about nine o'clock

Mr. Barker retired, announcing his intention by a laconic "Good night."

My mother slept a good deal during the night, only interrupting the quiet of the chamber from time to time by a sigh so heart-broken that my grandmother and I who sat on opposite sides of the bed, looked silently in each other's eyes for sympathy. The invalid had a shadowy look as if she had passed through a forty days' fever; and as she lay with her fingers intertwined in her dark hair, her head rested on the pillow as if haunted by unwelcome dreams.

About midnight it came on to rain violently, and loud peals of thunder followed the swiftly intermitting flashes. With a sudden start, my mother sat upright in the bed and stared wildly about the room. Her eye rested on me in a troubled way as if she were trying to recall something to her recollection.

"Frank, come here."

I went up to the bedside and took her hand. It trembled so that I could scarcely hold it. "It is a different place from what I thought it was, Frank: but why are you here? You have done nothing to be punished for. I know how it is; you followed to look after me."

At this moment my father stepped softly into the room. At sight of him she uttered a piercing shriek.

"You have come for me," she cried: "I knew you would. I knew that you would seek me out even here—here where the thunders crack and the lightnings glare. Do not speak to me—there is no Atonement, no Election, no Trinity, no Sabbath, no unpardonable sin here—nothing but howling and gnashing of teeth. Home? No, I will not go with you, I will stay where I am. Home? To be watched by you, to feel your eyes glancing through my heart, to be told that my little sisters are damned because they died before they were old enough to embrace salvation; to take that for the law of God which I feel to be only the solicitation of the Devil; home? I will tell you what your home is like? Imagine an interminable cavern, and yourself



walking in it over countless reptiles ; no light but their eyes, no sound but their hisses, no sensation but the numbing agony of their bite. No, no, no, I will never, never go back to *that*." She passed from these dreadful images to others still more incoherent. She saw and described them in words and figures as luminous as the flashes of the lightning that lit the heavens. The hell that she had voluntarily sought, terrible as it was to her, was a welcome dream contrasted with the dreadful nightmare conjured up by her diseased imagination.

My father in vain tried to restore her to herself by soothing words such as I never before heard from him. This only made her rave the more wildly, and as he approached the bed with his arms extended in a supplicating way as if to embrace her, she struggled so fiercely that it was only with the exercise of my whole strength that I could keep her from throwing herself upon the floor to effect her escape from him.

"Leave the room, James ; don't you see that your presence here drives her mad ?" said my grandmother.

He obeyed without remonstrance. As soon as he was gone my mother became more calm. The drops of perspiration still stood on her forehead and hands ; still tremor after tremor like successive waves swept over her nervous frame ; still her eyes glared in the direction of the door. Gradually, however, these exhibitions of suffering became less and less violent, and at last died away in another fit of restless slumber. These successive intervals of sleeping and waking wore out the storm.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DAVIES PRAYER BOOK.

FOR several days my mother's condition was very critical. Her mind wandered at first from physical weakness and partly from its struggles with overmastering adversaries that confused and baffled it. The presence of my father was very disturbing to her,

and threw her into a nervous shiver even when she showed no outward sign of fear or aversion. At times she would break out into piercing cries of terror, like those of some frightened wild creature pursued by its natural destroyer. A variety of subjects of the greatest conceivable diversity haunted her mind, and kept it in a series of transitional circles like water in a whirlpool. I shall never forget those few days. Gloom pervaded the house. The very atmosphere of the little parlor was stifling, and the swarthy old man and his wretched son-in-law moved about in it like spectres. They said little, but by slow degrees fell into unity of mood that found utterance in kind glances and sympathetic nods and gestures. The fruits of this mutual condonation ripened so rapidly that on the third morning of our stay there, as Mr. Barker took down the old Davies Prayer Book and opened it, my father extended his hand gently and caught hold of it.

"Let me read," he said.

The unfeigned astonishment of the old gentleman had something dramatic in it.

"You?"

"Yes. What shall I read?"

"That," replied my grandfather, pointing to the prayer for the sick.

We all knelt down. My father read the petition fervently, as if he had himself constructed it. Then he let his eye fall upon the Lord's prayer, and began to read that.

When he came to "trespasses" he stopped and choked as if the word in that place were an enemy that was lying in wait for him. It seemed impossible for him not to say "debts," but he uttered the strange syllables with a gasp and went through every word of the version without another break.

After that they alternated, Mr. Barker reading in the evening, and my father extemporizing in the morning.

During the latter exercise, which was rather long, Mr. Barker would stand up and make short journeys on the hearth-rug, but he certainly meant no disrespect

by this unusual mode of worship. Indeed he could hardly have been expected to help it, and his step was perfectly noiseless.

This tacit compromise made a great impression upon me, and gave me some revelations about the petty differences of sects and the quirks and snaps of verbal criticism, that have for so many ages unspiritualized the teachings and mission of Christ, and made even their partial success so much more miraculous than the miracles themselves.

Partly from Marcella's accident and the relations existing between her and me, and partly from our domestic affairs, my eye rests upon that eventful week whenever I look backward, with a strange interest, as a tired child stops under a tree whose dark shadows enchant while they startle him.

Although I was now twenty years old, I was more childlike than most persons of that age. I had been brought up in a very simple way, with few companions to enliven the petty incidents that make up the sum of rural life. My sensibilities were so acute that I could not at that time recall a single day that had not inflicted a wound, and some of these had left scars. Still I had never ventured to look into the future with the insatiate longing of youth, to find and to pursue some object worthy of manly ambition that should set me apart upon a pedestal above the rest of mankind, but had read and dreamed and moved about among my fellows as if born only to drift upon an irresistible current. In the seclusion of that sick chamber I began to reflect seriously upon the great problems of life. I began to turn my thoughts inward and to ask myself what uses I was made to subserve in the world, and whether it was possible for me to struggle out of the solid framework of formalism into which society was crystallized.

New England was then to a careless observer just what it had been for nearly two hundred years. Foreign immigration had not invaded us; railroads, telegraphs, insurance companies, manufactories had not

broken up the monotony of agricultural existence. The housewife did her spinning and weaving, the farmer his reaping and mowing by hand labor. The schools of philosophy now so flourishing in our principal New England cities, engrafted upon the transplanted stocks of Grecian gardens, had not then taken root among us. With the exception of the crude verses of Dwight, Trumbull and Hopkins, we had no literature. We had Harvard and Yale, with a few younger institutions plodding on in the ruts of Greek and Latin classics and the physical sciences; we had here and there a theologic smithery, hammering its rugged metal into forms pretended to be modeled after Calvin, but which he would have regarded with disdain: we had substituted a new system of self-government for the old monarchical one. Episcopacy and Methodism had set up for themselves, with beginnings so feeble that even persecution relented; but for the rest we were to all outward seeming precisely where Hooker and Davenport had left us, without a tithe of their vitality or a spark of their noble enthusiasm.

But with all this semblance of stability, had we made no progress during those two centuries? Were there not lying beneath this dreary surface germs already sprouting that would soon spring up to clothe the country with verdure—germs yet to be crowned with blossoms and fruited with thought? Were we to move forever in the same treadmill, leaving off where our fathers did, and lying down to rest with them, no wiser, no better than they? As I stole about the darkened chamber, I turned over and over in my mind what Dr. Stanyan had said to my father. What availed the endless discussions upon the forms of worship, the wearisome definitions that had only been weapons in the hands of one sect of christians to crush another, during so many centuries? I looked for them in vain in the utterances of Christ. A few brief mandates, a few promises, a few homely illustrations obvious to the common understanding, a short life spent in bearing the burdens of humanity and lifting it up into the light—

these, with the example of His death and the glory of His resurrection, were all that he had left us. No fabrics of rubbish, no Babels of jargon had he builded upon this everlasting foundation. From that time I began to entertain opinions upon these grave subjects that exerted a powerful influence upon my character.

One evening as I sat by my mother's bedside, she slowly opened her eyes, fixed them on me with her old look and asked :

"Where is your father, Frank?"

"In the parlor, mother; shall I call him?"

"Yes; no, not if he is asleep."

"I am not asleep," called out my father from the settle. "Shall I come?"

"Yes, James."

Slowly he came out and advanced toward the bed. She rose up as he approached, threw her arms about him, kissed him and hid her face against his breast. Then she sobbed, as if she never would have done.

At last she said, without lifting her eyes :

"Oh! James, I am very, very sinful; there is no hope for such a sinner."

"Don't say that, Mary," he said with deep emotion. "Don't say that, you are good, too good. Think of me."

"I can think of nothing but myself. Oh, James, do you know what I was trying to do? Do you know that I am a self-murderer in the eye of God?"

"It was not you that did it; don't wring your hands so, don't cry so. It was not you."

"Kneel down by the bed and pray for me," she said. "From the book?" he asked, starting up to get it. "No, from your own heart, James, in your own words." He fell upon his knees, still holding her hand, and offered up a short, simple prayer from the depths of his soul. No words framed by any other person and printed in a book could have been half so touching, because none could have been so natural. When he had finished my mother looked up and asked: "Do you really think that He will forgive me, if I promise never

again to yield to temptation? Do you think He could do it?"

"I feel sure of it," answered my father. "His promises never fail."

She looked in his face, with a firm resolve and a heavenly smile upon her lips, and said:

"I promise."

There was silence in the room for some minutes, then she said earnestly: "In the morning, James, send for the chaise and I will go home with you."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

ALTHOUGH I had paid a little visit to the parsonage every day to inquire after Marcella, and had heard from her every few hours, I had not seen her for more than a week.

I took advantage one morning of the presence of my grandmother, who had come to pass the day at our house, and hurried away to the village.

I found Marcella reclining on a lounge in her father's study. She sat up to receive me, and gave me her hand so joyfully that I was not disposed to resign it, nor did she seem anxious to withdraw it from me even after I had kissed it more than once. She was thin and pale. Her manner with me was perfectly unrestrained.

"I am so glad to see you, Frank. I have missed you, but it could not be helped. How is your dear mother this morning?"

"Better—and you are?"

"Better and stronger every day. The sharp aches and faintness are gone, but they have left me weak. I often awake in the night and feel pains that I suppose are only imaginary, for they pass away as soon as my mind is fully composed. Sometimes I am puzzled to make out whether they are dreams or only impressions. I have often thought lately that dreams do not belong to

us personally as individuals, but are incident to the race, like epidemics—they are so many and so wild, so like atmospheric visitations. Thoughts are strange enough, but they seem to be under the control of the will; but dreams!" She pressed her hands against her temples and closed her eyes.

I knew what was going on in her mind. I knew that she saw that minute with all the vividness of reality the hateful crotalus. I caught her hands and pulled them away from her temples.

"Quite too metaphysical for one of your age, Miss. No more of that. On the authority of Homer, dreams descend from Jupiter," said Dr. Stanyan, advancing from a little nook in the room, and presenting himself for the first time. "There must be an end of dreaming. You know what Dr. Carew told you, and here you are upon forbidden ground again. You have talked yourself into a fever already. What can I do to punish such disobedience?"

"I promise amendment, father."

"For the hundredth time. Well, Frank, as two weeks of the long vacation are gone already, and your mother is so much better, I hope to see you here oftener. But Marcella is too weak to talk with you to-day. Come with me."

I shook hands with Marcella and promised to call and see her when she should be better able to converse with me, and then followed Dr. Stanyan into the parlor. When he had closed the door he said:

"I am about to speak to you upon a very delicate matter, because I know that I can depend upon your discretion, and that whatever I may say will be kept secret. You are still a room-mate of Dart?"

"Yes, sir."

"And on intimate terms with him?"

"I cannot say that. We have come to no open rupture, but there is a coldness between us of late. I have scarcely spoken with him since the term closed."

"What is the cause of the estrangement?"

"I really cannot tell, Dr. Stanyan. I have given him no cause."

"What is your relative scholarship?"

"In the mathematics he is my superior; in every other department I am his."

"Whose chances are the best for the highest honors in the class?"

"I cannot say."

"And he never alludes to it?"

"No, sir."

"If there is no rivalry between you, are you aware of any other motive that could influence his mind against you?"

I hesitated. He waited for me and then said:

"Do you object to answering that question?"

"I do, simply because I cannot answer positively."

"Then we will leave it for the present."

He pulled a letter from his pocket and handed it to me. It was addressed to Marcella, postmarked at a neighboring town, and the seal was broken.

"Whose handwriting is that?" he asked.

I examined the address carefully.

"It is a disguised hand," I said.

"Yes, but whose?"

I shook my head.

"Open it and read it," he said.

I obeyed. The text of the letter was in the same constrained chirography as that of the superscription, and the contents were villainous enough. I was the subject of the communication. It would be difficult to say, under the guise of friendship, more disparaging things in the same number of words than the writer had contrived to charge upon me. Everything that can shake the confidence of woman in man found a place there. Much that was not expressed was intimated, and quite enough was expressed to throw me into a fever of passion.

"Has *she* seen it?" I asked.

"No; I did not dare to show it to her in her present weak condition."



"It is a lying paper. Every word of it, assertion and insinuation, is a lie!"

"I believe it. But who wrote it? Who could dare to write an anonymous letter of any sort to my daughter?"

Knowing from the previous conversation the conclusion to which he had come, I felt ashamed to be the first to express my suspicions and again shook my head.

"Whoever did it," I said at last, "it is a good piece of work."

Dr. Stanyan took the letter and pointed to a small word near the bottom of the page.

"That is undisguised."

"And that is Willam Dart's," I said, unable any longer to restrain myself. "And look at that long stroke of the p, and that b, and that k! Oh! the wicked, wicked wretch!"

"I thought I could not be mistaken about the authorship," said Dr. Stanyan, putting the letter in his pocket. "Let it rest as it is. Under no circumstances let him know that you suspect him. Watch him closely, Frank, and—and take the valedictory, if you don't sleep a wink in a twelvemonth."

## CHAPTER XI.

### AMONG THE BRAMBLES.

I WENT home by a very indirect route, and to this day I cannot tell what induced me to take it. About half a mile north of the village was one of those charming little lakes with which our county abounds more than any other in the state. This sparkling gem, set in its rim of hills, is the boast of the neighborhood. The lake covers about one hundred acres. It is fed solely by springs, the unfailing surplus of which makes Kinley Brook. The shore line could hardly be more irregular than it is, or the little necks and shoulders of the capes and peninsulas more plump than they are,

with the shadows of the leaves over them, playing with the dimples of the pools below them. Gelid as unsunned cavern-fountains, bright as the marl and spar of island grottoes are the shy waters.

The eastern shore formed a part of the boundary of my father's farm, and there at the southeastern extremity, gurgling around the roots of a moss-covered sugar maple, the infant brook, so small that you can choke it with your hand, begins its feeble existence. There were several small houses on or near the border, and among others, perched on a knoll and commanding the whole basin below, with all its jaunty groups of oaks, pines, chestnuts and hemlocks, was the house (if it should not rather be called a hut) of Oliver Cromwell Bramble, the constable.

I took the south line of the lake, keeping as near the margin as was convenient for easy walking, until I came in front of Oliver's house. There was a compound of every distracting thing in my head that ever puzzled anybody's, and I drooped along as if I had been in the dark.

"What! ain't I wuth stoppin' ter shake hands with, Mr. Frank? Wind in ter th' right, ef yer not in a hurry. I've got suthin' t' say ter ye. Mind the slewce. I snugs, ef yer go with yer head alow like that yew'll swash inter th' water."

I started as I was crossing the log, indicated by the word "slewce," that led across a little creek. I was made so nervous by the sudden interruption that I came near fulfilling the prophecy.

"Ah! is that you, Oliver?"

"Guess 'tis; was when I looked in the glass this mornin'. Hain't seen it sence 'cept in the water. Guess same face; ain't conscious no change inside; guess same outside, only six hours older. Whew!"

"What are you doing there?"

"I'm a bull-headin' an' a perchin' an' a punkin-seedin'. Fishin's better'n nothin'—must eat; wife an' four children; can't work at hayin' in th' rain, yer know. Wish I was a parson; I'd stop this ere drizzlin'

an' wringin' of th' dish-clout on th' medders, or hang up my black coat in th' corn fields fur a skeer-crow. Stanyan's tried it tew Sundays runnin' an' he can't stop it. Decon Trowbridge, he says (with a shake of his head not flattering to the deacon) that if Stanyan read Calvin more an' newspapers an' heathen Latin an' sich stuff less, an' ef he'd be more speritual-minded, he cu'd cork up the heavins as tight as a bottle. I've got a hull acre of grass deown an I've tedded it, an' pitched it, an' raked it, an' cocked it, an' opened it, an' rolled it up agin, an' turned it, till it stinks, an' it's no use. Whew! Come here a minit. I've got suthin' t' say t'ye; it's private tew."

I walked up to the rock where he was fishing and leaned up against a tree.

"What is it, Oliver?"

"Stop a minit. There's a bite!"

So I stood and watched the queer little crooked man until he should be at leisure to impart what he desired to communicate. As a representative of a class he was worthy of a critical examination. He was red complexioned, red-haired, with small sharp grey eyes lurking beneath bushy brows, hollow cheeks, and a thin bony nose pointing out almost horizontally, as if it had been made for boring into hard substances. The mixture of curiosity, shrewdness and secretive-ness in the expression of his features bespoke the true laboring Yankee type unmistakably enough. The creature must have been born, bred and developed in New England, and could have originated in no other part of the world. The utter freedom from restraint, the disputatious, self-opinionated air, the stubborn, defiant determination to live, like a mullein or a pennyroyal stalk, and thrive where nothing else could take root, were as indigenous to the country as the bullheads he was angling for. The nibble, as it appeared to me, proved at last to be a real bite, as the fine perch swung over the head of Oliver bore witness.

"There, now we'll go," said he,

"Where?"

"To my den."

"Why not talk here?" I asked.

"Cudn't! Sally's t' dew th' talkin'. I'm a consterble. Doan't never commit myself. Hearsay evidence not to be admitted; eye witness, yer know. Come!"

He took up his fish basket, shook it two or three times as if estimating the value of the contents, and began to climb the hill, stooping forward as though he had been made to go upon all fours. I followed in silence, but silent it was impossible for him to remain.

"Droll thing that 'bout Miss Marcella?—Predestinatin' critters, them rattlesnakes.—Didn't bite her though. Ef they're app'inted tew they will, an' ef they ain't they won't. What a varmint he was to skeer half ter death th' pootiest gal in teown. Wouldn't have teched me; might use him for a piller. I'm tew old an' tough. Snakes knows what's good ez well ez other folks. Dear little jay; she doan't weigh nothin', but it made me most faint away to carry my part on her. Tom was faint, tew, big and awk'rd as he is."

Being in no mood to prolong the discussion of a subject so painful to me, I said nothing to induce him to enlarge upon this well meant commendation.

We found Tom standing in the door, his feet covering nearly half the whole sill, and his great ropy hands clinging in a fungous way to the casement for support. His mother, a little, dumpy, dark woman, stood behind him, and hardly came up to his waist. To say that he was as big as his father and mother both would not be an over statement.

"Git that hulk of your'n eout th' doorway so ez Mister Frank ken see that dot of a woman behind ye, will ye?" said Oliver to his son.

"Ha! Mister Frank!" said Mrs. Bramble in a shrill voice that went through my head like a fife. She came forward and shook hands with a cordiality as jerky and demonstrative as her voice. She had great black eyes that looked as if—provided it were possible for anything to escape her husband's notice—they would be sure to find it.

"God bless us, how glad I am to see you ! How's yer father, an' yer poor blessed mother, an' Mr. Barker an' his wife, an' all th' rest of th' folks on th' Ridge ?"

I replied with becoming particularity.

"He wants tew see ye, Sal. Private, yer know," said Mr. Bramble, walking up to his wife, sticking his nose almost in her face and winking at her.

"Clear the roost !" piped Mrs. Bramble in a key at least two octaves higher than I could have believed that she could go.

At this admonition, three sprigs from the parent bushes, in the shape of three red-headed girls, scampered out of the house and fled to unknown places of concealment.

"Be off, Tom," said his father. "Stop ! This wet weather makes me ez dry ez punk. I'm all puckered up inside. It's 'leven o'clock—tansy-time. Fetch some tansy, Tom, an' doan't step on it."

"What a quantity of it you have here," I said, looking out at the luxuriant growth that covered half the garden.

"Yes, it's a lovely yarb—bewtiful !" said Mr. Bramble in a sentimental tone. "But I can't manage it ; there's tew much on it. I s'pose," he added in a hesitating way, as if making a mathematical calculation ; "I s'pose I lose ez much ez a hundred dollars a year by not havin' winkum to drink with my tansy. There, lay it deown on th' table, Tom, an' ez I was a sayin', be off !"

"Can't I have a sniff ?" asked Tom, opening his mouth with a yawn that I hardly think the case-bottle that his father was manipulating would have filled.

"No, yew can't !" said his mother, walking up and making a grab which appeared to be aimed at Tom's shoulder, but fastened into his arm a little above the elbow. "Yew shan't have no more winkum to-day. Drop off, yer slug."

"Heow ken I drop off when you're a holdin' on to me like that, mother ? Pinchers is mild t' yer claws," ejaculated Tom.

"Let go on him, Sally," said Oliver.

"Ef I dew I'll fas'en on t' yew, ye old grizzle," retorted his spouse. "There, make tracks!" she continued, pushing Tom toward the door.

Tom shook himself, rubbed his arm and disappeared.

"I'll tell you what, Sally, you're tew hard on that ar child," said Mr. Bramble. "It may be fun ter yew, but ef ye'll try them teasels on that fat arm of your'n, ye'll hev a revelation it hurts! They're oncommon long, an' ez to cuttin' qualities, that wild critter—what's his name that got tired of bein' a king an' tuk t' th' pasters? I can't never remember Christian names,—Nebkernezer—might hev hed longer uns, but feedin' on a veg'table diet he didn't keep 'em in order by fleshin' 'em as yew dew!"

"I'll whet 'em on yer bones," screamed Sally, "ef yew aggravate me. I'm a gittin' riled."

"Neow, Sal-ly, doan't; yer ain't tender when yer in a rage. Yew know heow it disfigures ye," said Mr. Bramble. "Besides, we've got suthin' tew tell. Mr. Frank wants tew hear it. There! Let me hev a grog, an' then.—Come, Mr. Frank."

"No, Oliver; I never drink cider brandy."

Mrs. Bramble was evidently not insensible to the smoothing down process, especially when there was a secret to be disclosed. She drew in her breath, and let herself gradually settle into a state of tranquillity, contenting herself with snapping her finger joints, and saying in a lower key:

"Course he doan't drink winkum; nobody but beasts does."

"Yew show a want of observation of th' nateral world," said Mr. Bramble. "That's jest what a beast doan't do. He lacks the elerment of aspiration. He is contented with bein' a beast; doan't want to look no higher. He's satisfied with keepin' on his legs."

"That's more'n yew be," said Mrs. Bramble, with a comically triumphant look addressed to me, as much as to call me to witness that she had the best of it, and had an inexhaustible store of ammunition left that she

could have expended if the enemy had not struck his colors.

"There, neow, Sally, doan't!" began Mr. Bramble.

"Well, then, let me be," said his wife.

"Neow tell us all about her an' the Southern youngster," said Oliver.

I started as if something had stung me.

"Dart and—and—"

"Yes," said Mrs. Bramble, mysteriously.

"You don't mean to say that her name can be associated—"

"Doan't know 'bout her name bein' 'sociated—doan't speak of her name; speak of *her*. But what ails ye? you're ez white ez a sheet. I'd better hold my tongue. You're allers a gittin' me into scrapes, Oliver, with your blab-blab-blab!"

"I hain't told nothin'," said Oliver. "I said yew would tell suthin'. If ye doan't want tew ye needn't. There's no hurt done. Sorry I stirred ye up, Mr. Frank, but I tell yew everything, an' yew never let it leak eout. Drop it, Sally, an' say no more 'bout it."

By this time my blood was at a fever heat. I rose and stepped up to Oliver with a determination that he had never seen in me before.

"I am not to be trifled with, Oliver. I have a right to know and will know what you promised to tell me."

"But ef she won't tell," said Bramble, indecisively—"I wish she wud, but ef she woan't, she woan't. She is jest like th' weather, sometimes yew can't start her, an' then agin' when she gits her teeth sot like that, yew might ez well cure the lockjaw ez git a word eout on her. Ef yer pry her opin, yew'll break her, yer know."

"Mrs. Bramble," said I, grasping both her fat hands and looking into her black eyes, "do you think I would hesitate to tell a woman of your sense and judgment anything that it concerned her to know? I would never have believed that you could distrust me so. I thought our confidence was mutual."

"Ef I'd a known it interested yew—" said Sally relenting.

"And I tell you, it is a matter of life and death to me."

"Hah? an' ye won't never tell nobody."

"I will never mention your name without your consent," I replied.

"Well then, for nearly a week he's been eout with her a'most every evenin' till ten o'clock."

"No one else with them?" I inquired.

"No."

"Partiklers, Sally," said Mr. Bramble. "He wants partiklers."

"Yes, don't spare my feelings. Let me know the worst."

"Well; I'd watched 'em for several evenin's an' found that they was mighty thick and lovin'. So I told Oliver to follow 'em. He can tell yer what he did."

"I'm a civil officer," said Bramble. "I won't confess nothin', darned ef I dew."

"Then darned ef I dew," said his wife.

"Well then, I'll break over once," said Oliver. "Day afore yesterday afternoon, I waited till they'd got by an' eout of sight, then I crawled up tew a line funder off from the water than they did an' I tracked 'em to th' big maple, where th' brook runs eout. Then I left 'em a settin' deown under th' grape vine an' come back an' reported to Sally."

"Yes," said Mrs. Bramble, taking up the narrative where he had left it. "An' they come back a quarter before ten o'clock. So I found eout where their nest was, an' I thought I'd get ahead on 'em yisterday; an' I started eout as early as seven o'clock, right arter the shower, an' lay deown an' hid betwixt an' old log an' a rock, jest back of th' grape vine, an' covered myself with leaves. They was wet tew. Bimeby I heard a rustlin' an' their voices, an' then they come deown in th' old place. Then I raised my head an' looked through the vine leaves, an' I could see 'em though they couldn't see me. She was dreadfully draggled with th' wet bushes. She had took off her bunnett an' was



a settin' with her back toward me, an' he was a settin' aside o' her with his arm reound her waist, an' a holdin' one o' her hands in his'n in sech a tender way that I could hev bit him. Says I to myself what ken her father be a thinkin' on tew let things go on so an' she so young.

"Well! Mrs. Bramble."

"Well, arter a while he begun ter talk to her 'bout North Carliny, an' his fortin', an' his prospects, an' went on in sech a way a huggin' an' a kissin' on her, an' she a cryin' an' a sobbin' at sech a rate, that I was put to't to keep from screamin'. I couldn't hear a quarter they said for they talked very low, an' most of th' time they whispered, but fin'ly I heard her say suthin' 'beout her father. Then he said suthin' tew her 'beout his father, an' shook his head; then he whispered suthin' tew her an' she screamed eout an' said: 'I would die before I would run away from him like a thief!' She got up as she spoke an' pulled her hand away from him an' walked a step or tew an' stood a cryin'. Oh, heow she did cry; dear me suz, heow she did cry!"

"What else, Mrs. Bramble? Go on."

"Well, he went arter her an' pled, an' coaxed, an' told her heow he loved her, an' was willin' to die for her, an' then they started off together towards hum, an' that's all I know 'beout it."

During this recital I think every drop of blood in my frame must have settled at my heart. What a ruined fabric lay at my feet!

"Oh! Marcella, Marcella," I cried.

"She aint such a fool," cried Mrs. Bramble. "It's a sin an' a shame to name *her* in th' same breath with—"

"Will you drive me mad?" I gasped. "What do you mean? Whom do you speak of?"

"Charlotte Carew," she replied with an astonishment equal to mine.

"Thank God!" I exclaimed.

I drew a long breath and walked to the door. It

seemed as if there was not air enough in the universe to restore me. Then crept over my mind a death shadow of doubt that blinded and chilled me.

"Poor, poor Charlotte," I exclaimed. "Oh! the villain! the villain! Good-bye."

"Mind you're not tew tell an' git me into trouble. We're poor folks," said Mrs. Bramble.

"Remember I'm a civil officer," said her husband.

"I will never mention your names without your consent."

## CHAPTER XII

### SUPPLICIA.

THE first recollection that I have of anything after leaving Bramble's is that I found myself sitting on the wall nearly opposite our house, on the other side of the highway, under an immense white oak tree that must have been in middle life when the English settlers made their first acquaintance with the country. The branches of this tree spread so wide and drooped so low that they afforded a perfect screen for me, and one great limb ran out horizontally a little above the wall and furnished a good prop for my arms that were resting on it.

As I sat there watching the delicately serrated leaves, green on this side, gray on that, and the shining acorns in their embossed cups, interweaving them in some fantastic way with recent thoughts and events, I saw Haco come out of the front door and start down the road. He passed by without noticing me, and a little below where I was perched, made a stand in the middle of the highway, and uttered a fierce growl. I looked a little further on and saw a chaise coming up with a gentleman in it. As Haco was usually a sensible, quiet dog, I was a little surprised at his behavior. He kept his post, growling in the most threatening manner, when the gentleman, seeing that he did not mean to give ground, stopped the chaise and began to remon-

strate in a tone not calculated to quiet him. What can it mean, I said to myself. Ah, now I understand. It's Deacon Trowbridge.

Nobody could tell why, but Haco could not abide the presence of Deacon Trowbridge. I never knew the faithful, independent creature bark at a beggar or shabbily dressed person in my life. When such a visitor came upon the premises, the dog would meet him at the gate, follow close at his heels, watch him every moment to see that he manifested a suitable respect for the rights of property, and conduct him back into the road when his call was ended. But somehow Haco hated Deacon Trowbridge. He had bitten the deacon's leg once under very aggravating circumstances in the deacon's own store. It came near causing a quarrel between the proprietor of the dog and the proprietor of the store. As Haco steadily refused to make the *amende honorable*, or give any reason for this unaccountable assault and battery, my father apologized for him and so the affair was settled. I have always supposed that the deacon had kicked Haco in the sensitive days of puppy-hood or put some other indignity upon him not to be atoned for ; but the antipathy may have been owing to constitutional inaptitudes between the parties that could not be overcome. Be this as it may, Haco omitted no opportunity to insult and bully the old gentleman, and we were at last obliged to keep the dog tied up at home on the Sabbath day, because he had contracted a habit of waylaying his adversary at the meeting-house door and snarling at him in the most unchristian manner. When the deacon saw that Haco refused to recognize the law of the road, he turned out and passed around on the left. This manoeuvre, though effected under protest of the other party, would have succeeded well enough, had the chaise kept on past our house. But the moment Haco saw the horse's head pointing toward our gate, he sprang forward, raised himself on his hind legs, took the tie rein in his mouth, and held it fast. I now thought it time for me to interfere. I jumped from the wall, ran across the street,

took the rein from the dog, boxed his ears soundly, (an operation that he submitted to very meekly), extended my hand to the deacon and helped him to alight. His face was purple with rage.

"Frank," he said, beating the air with his silver-headed mahogany cane, and looking hard at the culprit. "Do you know what I'd do, if I owned that dog? I'd brain him."

"Get down, you rascal!" I said, more to appease the deacon's offended dignity than because I blamed the brute, for I knew he couldn't help it. Haco drew in his tail and settled down on the grass in a couchant way, fixing his great angry eyes on Deacon Trowbridge, but out of loyalty to me, maintaining the decorum of keeping his mouth shut. Indeed his lips were rather more compressed than I liked. "I'm very sorry he was so impertinent, sir," I said.

"Impertinent, young gentleman! Do you call it impertinence to stop me on the road and turn me into the ditch? It's highway robbery, sir, or something worse. Impertinent indeed! Oh you serpent!" and he again shook his cane at the dog.

"I regret it very much, sir; indeed I do; but let me beg you not to flourish your stick at him. I'm afraid he'll do you a mischief. I'll get him out of the way."

"Let him bite me if he dare," said the deacon, following my advice, however, in relation to the cane. "It won't be the first time, but it will be the last. I give you warning of that."

I tied the dog up to a shade tree behind the house, judging that to be the best way of bringing about a general pacification. The deacon stood by, and looked on with every appearance of satisfaction, and when this preliminary was completed followed me into the house. As he expressed a desire to see my father who was absent in the field and had to be sent for, I tried to make myself as entertaining as I could. The old gentleman's feelings were ruffled, and this task was rather difficult at first. As he sat by the window with

his great silver-headed cane between his knee-buckles, a formidable gold watch, seal and key dangling from his fob, a ring on his right forefinger that could not have been worn for the comfort of any one shaking hands with him; a general air of portly dogmatism about his person, a stern moral rigidity drawing down the corners of his wide mouth and propping up the muscles about his stout chin—I could not help feeling the responsibility of my situation. To the other awe-inspiring advantages lavished upon him, I must not forget his large square head, with two great bulges over the semi-circular eyebrows to mark what phrenologists now call the perceptive faculties, and a ridge of logical sequences, causality and other kindred dialectic treasures, running across the upper part of his forehead. His eyes were of a light grey, and had a spiritual tranquillity in them truly appalling. It was not the cherubic spirituality of the poet's young courier angel, but the mature, and I might say strategic, type belonging to one of the older and wiser seraphs, ripened by the politics and wars of the celestial regions. The above is a pretty accurate sketch of the look, air, and appearance of Deacon Zalmon Trowbridge when in a state of repose. Of a totally different order of man-structure from Oliver Bramble, he was equally an exclusively New England production. He was the fifth in a line of deacons, springing from the emigrant, Elijah Trowbridge, a clergyman and Cambridge man, who had, as he used to say, "been strained through both strainers, the Leyden and the Mayflower;" evidence which might have been conclusive in regard to his antiprelatical sentiments without the confirmation furnished by his Latin pamphlet published in 1663, entitled "*Scortum Romæ*," in which his delineations of the character of the Mistress of the Seven Hills were anything but complimentary to her. He has left to posterity equally good testimony of the abhorrence in which he held sectaries, in a subsequent work named "*Supplicia*," pointing out the best mode of punishing and eradicating Quakers and other schismatics. The stinging ef-

ficacy of the latter work is attested by the fact that Mistress Higginson is said to have received forty stripes, save one, on her bare back for publicly contrasting it with the teachings of Christ as set forth in the Four Gospels. From his day downward the Trowbridges had been a well-to-do family, and, from the happy accident of vitality in the male line, the continuity of deaconhood had been kept up unbroken in the oldest son for five generations. In 1765, Deacon Juba Trowbridge, the grandfather of Deacon Zalmon, had leased to our ecclesiastical society, for the term of his natural life, a tract of land containing about forty acres with a parsonage house on it, and on the day of executing the lease had made his will, devising to the society "the same premises to the like uses, so long as the same doctrines should be preached and taught by the clergyman of the society as were then preached and taught by the Reverend Jonathan Everett."

This Jonathan Everett was my father's grandfather, and had now been dead about forty years. Dr. Stanyan, the incumbent, was the third clergyman since Mr. Everett's day.

Very soon after Dr. Stanyan was installed, Deacon Zalmon began to pick flaws in the doctrines preached and taught by him, and to make other very pointed demonstrations against him. He sat in a prominent pew with a fearfully massive pair of silver-cased spectacles on, and always took copious notes of the sermons, written or extemporaneous, with an air of incredulity that would have driven me wild, but I never could see that Dr. Stanyan was disturbed by it.

Even during prayer-time the deacon's lips would move, as if he were repeating the words and weighing their import, and as soon as the petition was over he would scratch away with all his might to commit it to paper while it was yet fresh in his recollection. His enemies said (for like other good men he had enemies) that this doctrinal zeal was quickened by the increased value of the devised property, which was worth more than twice as much as it had been in the days of his

grandfather, Deacon Juba. Deacon Zalmon did not deign to reply to this imputation except by falling back upon his general christian character. "If that will not save me my word wouldn't," he used to say.

On the occasion of this visit, I waited some time for him to introduce a topic of conversation, but as he was unusually reluctant, I at last said :

"It is very rainy weather, sir."

"Yes," he replied. "I never saw the like of it, and there appears to be no way of stopping it ;" sighing in a reminiscent way as if time had been when matters were different. "That is one of the things I came to speak to your father about."

After another pause, he introduced the subject of my college education.

"I am glad to hear such a good account of you at Yale. I once had thought of going there myself, but my father couldn't spare me. The death of my brother prevented it, you see. The poor old gentleman needed some one to take charge of the property, and to be a prop to him in his declining years. So I was obliged to give it up. I suppose you mean to be a minister?"

"I don't look so far as that yet."

"It's high time, young man, high time. Have you asked yourself whether your christian experiences would warrant such a choice?"

"No, sir."

"Have you read Griffin?"

"Yes, sir."

"Calvin?"

"Casually."

"Casually, sir? You should read him prayerfully every day—a chapter every day, week in week out. I do, sir."

I nodded and he went on.

"Do you think works can save you?"

"None that I have ever done."

"I put it to you, young man, categorically, not as an abstract proposition. If you spent your whole life in

good works, and never did a wrong thing, would that save your soul?"

"With pure and holy motives?" I inquired.

"No matter about the motive. Would it save you from eternal damnation without faith? That's the question."

"I can't conceive of a life spent in that way without faith," I said. "I don't think it's a practical question. An individual good act might be done from a corrupt motive, but a good life, all tending to pure, benevolent, and holy ends never was impelled by such a motive and never will be. The statement is an absurdity. Faith *must* go with a holy life."

"Madness and folly! This comes of false teachers. Answer me this question: Can a man be saved without believing in infant damnation?"

"I don't think he could be saved if he *did* believe in it."

"Horrible infidelity! Once more: Can a man be saved without a belief in the resurrection of the body, and a full understanding of that doctrine?"

"The twelve disciples didn't understand anything about it. Thomas didn't believe it when he saw it, and said he wouldn't believe it until he felt it with his fingers. Do you think the disciples were damned?"

"That's a subterfuge, sir."

"Don't you think," I asked, "that a man's faculties might be so feeble that he could not understand *any* doctrine, and yet rely on Christ, and love Him without being able to tell why?"

"No, sir. Preposterous, sir."

"What would become of him after death, then?"

"He would be damned like an unregenerate infant, sir. He'd be damned like a suckling babe, sir," repeated the deacon, striking the floor with his cane.

As we were trenching upon belligerent ground, the entrance of my father was timely. He came in dripping wet, in no fit condition to champion his son, even if Deacon Trowbridge had felt disposed to pursue the controversy which evidently he did not.



"Dreadful, dreadful weather," said Deacon Trowbridge, as my father approached him like a great watering-pot. "Dreadful, dreadful!"

Nobody, least of all my father, could dispute the assertion, and he answered in the affirmative with an energy inspired by his condition.

"This visitation from the Lord," said Deacon Zalmom solemnly, "crowds us into a corner; into a corner, Brother Everett. Times were different once. I have heard my father, Deacon Aaron Trowbridge, say that when he was a boy fifteen years old or so, and sat under the ministrations of your grandfather, the Rev. Jonathan Everett, if there came on a wet spell of weather like this, when the grain sprouted in the fields and the hay rotted in the meadow, the farmers had nothing to do but wait on the minister and ask him to petition for sunshine on the next Sabbath day, and the clouds would break away and the mists would be sucked up almost in an instant. Now, alas! the more prayers, the more rain, I think. There must be some cause for this, some spiritual cause. What is it?"

"I cannot tell," said my father, "perhaps the wickedness of the people is the cause."

My father left the room a moment to put off his wet clothes and soon returned. The parlor door stood open, and there was hanging on the wall in plain sight, a portrait by Earl of the Rev. Mr. Everett. It represented a mild, grey haired old gentleman of seventy years, with a soft black eye and a benignant smile, a grandfatherly man, such as a child would have rushed at instinctively to climb upon and kiss and call by pet names; a man to stand over death-beds and encourage desponding sinners or send messages by dying saints just setting out on their way to heaven. Forgiveness, charity, sympathy followed the channel of every wrinkle that furrowed the dear old face. The life had been like the face, so everybody said who remembered either, or had heard his father or grandfather speak of them. Yet Mr. Everett had believed in the hard theology of those days, and had preached many a

doctrinal sermon to which his meek and holy life every day gave the lie. The face was in no way intellectual, or suggestive of anything salient except goodness.

Deacon Trowbridge seized my father's arm and led him toward the picture, bowing before it with so low a reverence that his watch-seal thumped against his stick, and placing his hand upon his heart with an emphasis that perhaps impressed my father and me in different ways. The dialectic ridge across the forehead dilated, and the perceptive hillocks over the eyes grew more portentous as he gazed at the portrait.

"Man-worship is a sin," he said, transfixing my father with one of his spiritual glances, "and perhaps I break the second commandment forbidding the worship of images when I bow down before that picture. But, brother Everett, when I look at it I am transported beyond myself by a flood of recollections. Oh! the blessed old times! Oh! the lost, lost days, when God's ministers kept open the way from earth to Heaven by daily communication! Time was in the history of that good man—exalted moments, (at least so I have heard my father, Deacon Aaron say), when he was so inspired with the faith that removes mountains, that he could prevail to change the face of the heavens from storm to sunshine and back again to storm as if by taking thought,—Again, I ask, why this change!"

My father sighed and made no answer.

"You may well sigh," resumed Deacon Zalmon. "If there was ever a people traveling through the 'valley of the shadow of death' without a guide it is this people. 'Heresies are taught in the family and preached from the pulpit. Our youth are instructed to turn from the true God and worship heathen divinities, (there he cast a withering glance at me). Doctrine after doctrine is made to give place to new theories until our piebald faith blinds us with its many colors. The lower rungs are all taken from the ladder of Jacob, so that not even Jacob himself could reach forth his hand to climb it.

Do you not see, brother, that we are like sheep having no shepherd?"

"I cannot see it," said my father.

"What! are we not fallen from the old faith?"

"Not from the faith of Christ, I trust."

"Not from the faith of our fathers?"

"*They* may not have come up to the full measure of faith."

"Can you say that in *his* presence?" pointing to the picture.

"Perhaps even *he* fell short of the mark, both in faith and practice. The forms of life change and we are bidden to press forward," answered my father.

"Let us not talk in riddles. Perhaps I fail to make myself clear to you," said Deacon Trowbridge, with an air of condescending superiority. "Perhaps you don't understand me. I may have used a—a language of a flight—well, to call a spade a spade, this is what I mean. I have sat for years under the preaching of Dr. Stanyan. I have noted his sayings and have taken down many of them in writing. I suppose it will be admitted that the family I feebly represent has for some generations been one of the principal pillars of this church!"

"Nobody could dispute that."

"And has been loyal to it?"

"Yes."

"And munificent to it?"

"Unquestionably."

"Has contributed largely to build meeting houses?"

"Liberally, deacon."

"And by gift and devise has provided a shelter for its pastor?"

"Nobly," my father said.

"Very well. I take it for granted then that the Trowbridges are a *voice* in this church—in a limited sense a *voice*. To resume and speak of my humble self. I say I have studied Dr. Stanyan. I have watched him night and day. I have hunted out his heresies from house to house. I have given antidotes to chil-

dren, aye to *youth*, (with another panther-like glance at me,) some of whom will profit by them, and others will keep on the road to perdition in spite of them. I know him, and he *knows* that I know him. It has not been a family trait of the Trowbridges to gloze, cringe, or call bad things by good names, and I have come here to tell you to-day that I will strip this enemy of our Zion bare so that the world can see him, and in the name of your grandfather to call on you to help me do it. Can I have that help? Will you vote for an investigation?"

"Not until I see his character in the same light that you do."

"Which is as much as to say, that you don't and can't," said Deacon Zalmon loftily. "You only speak the language of nine-tenths of the church. It is as I expected. But there are higher tribunals this side of Heaven, I should hope, than this church and society. I will appeal to them. I do not care whether I have the co-operation of one of you. I will overthrow this enemy of God, alone if need be, and the fewer the champions the greater the victory."

"Brother Trowbridge," my father said with such a look as I had learned to dread before I was four years old, "Dr. Stanyan is my pastor and my friend. The darker the day, the more comforting I always find his smile. He may be everything to you that you represent him, and acting on such a belief, you can pursue him to the end. But take care when you go into this battle to have a sharp weapon. You may need it."

"The fifth in a line of presbyters, all oldest sons and calling the Reverend Elijah Trowbridge, the author of 'Supplicia,' their Abraham," replied our visitor swelling into lofty proportions as if he were invested with the mantle of the great Hebrew Prophet, whose name the emigrant had honored,—“thanks you for the admonition. Now that we understand each other on this point, I wish to show you that I am still your friend and hope always to be, by asking a favor of you, which will call for no sacrifice on your part."

"Name it, sir."

"I desire to borrow for a careful perusal and to be safely returned those precious relics, the sermons of the Reverend Jonathan Everett."

My father hesitated a moment. I knew what was going on in his mind.

"To be safely returned and not to be used as evidence?" he said.

"To be safely returned and not to be used as evidence," replied the deacon.

"With all my heart. But you cannot take them home now. The chaise would not hold them. There is a whole barrel of them. I believe they have been carefully preserved. I will send them over to you in the cart to-morrow. I never read them; I hope you will find them edifying."

"No doubt I shall."

"And entertaining too," I said pertly.

"Religion is not an *entertaining* subject," said Deacon Trowbridge, glancing from my head to my feet as if I were a beggar and he were turning me out of doors.

He took his leave in the grave manner of the age of Washington with the Leyden and Mayflower dignities added. How malicious I was when I untied Haco; how wickedly I laughed when he started off after the chaise! The tones of his voice were not so bugle-like as those with which he was wont to welcome me after a long absence.

As the deacon drove off I looked at my father in a way that must have been interrogative, for he replied:

"Yes, Frank, of course it means the parsonage. How could you ask me such a question?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE WARNING.

THAT evening at an early hour I visited Charlotte. I found her in the garden seated in a little arbor shaded with clematis and honeysuckle. There was an open book lying on her lap, but her eyes were fixed on the glow that lighted up the west whence a strong breeze came, ruffling her dress and tossing her hair about her neck and shoulders.

She started when she saw me. A flush came over her face and a nervous tremor shook it, as the wind rippled the leaves of the poplar that grew by the garden wall.

"Come in, Cousin Frank, and help me," she said, offering me her hand and moving her slight figure a little to make room for me on the seat.

"Help you to do what, Charlotte?" I asked.

"To dream. What else is there for me to do?"

"Is there no other occupation for us in life?"

"Not for the young. At least nothing satisfactory. I can look at the sky. I have been doing it, but this is only dreaming through one's eyes. See how bright the clouds are. What a mad combination of colors that would be in a picture! Pictures exaggerate so and yet are so tame. These are fire, but they neither burn nor blind me."

"And these are the threads that you weave into dreams, Charlotte?"

"A part of them. I have others."

"What are they?" I said.

"Flowers, books, memory, association."

"This last has brought me here, Charlotte."

"What do you mean, Frank? Why do you stare at me so? You have come to scold me."

"Yes, Charlotte."

"Well?"

She pouted her cherry lips and turned full upon me her lively blue eyes. I faltered a little, for I had many

times encountered her wayward fits of temper, but as I had come for a purpose I soon rallied, and began a narration of what I had heard about her familiarity with William, and went through it with considerable particularity. She listened for some time with a self-constraint that I had not anticipated.

"Who told you these things," she asked, when I had nearly completed the story related to me by Oliver and Sally Bramble.

"I cannot tell you that. I have promised not to disclose the names of the authors."

She flew at me like a little tigress and caught my arm with her puny hands.

"I will know—you shall tell me!"

"No, Charlotte; I will not tell you."

She stamped her foot with vehemence, and reiterated:

"I will know! I will know!"

"Not from me," I said, shaking my head.

She let go her hold upon my arm and sank down upon the seat, every nerve in her body trembling with passion.

"I will not be questioned by you," she said. "You have no right to pry into my conduct. I will neither confess nor deny anything. I will not submit to dictation from you!"

"Hear me, Charlotte, if not for your own sake, for your father's. I entreat you to listen to me."

"Have you told my father, then?"

"No, not yet."

"Will you do it?" She was pale with fear now. "Oh, Frank, I am very miserable. My father knows nothing of this scandal. Do not torment him with it. Idle gossip drives him wild. I will not put myself in the way of it. If I ever did, I will not; I will be wise. Think of Charlotte Carew being wise! Come into the house now, and forget this nonsense. I'll sing you one of your favorite ballads. You will never, never, tell?"

"Not if you adhere to your plan of being wise."

There were no marks of suppressed tears on her face when we entered the house.

The volubility of Charlotte was the most astonishing thing about her. She sat down and sang with the natural warble of a bird, one of those weird ballads of her's which I used almost to think had been born with her wild and changeable temperament.

I went away still doubtful of what had passed between her and William. I will question him, I said to myself. Still her promise of good behavior comforted me.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MORAL CHARACTER OF THE DEVIL.

THE next day was Sunday, and I set forth alone for the village, going around the south side of the lake, with the intention of walking to meeting with Bramble and making further inquiries about the mystery between Dart and Charlotte. On arriving at Oliver's house I found that he had already gone, and I followed through the fields as rapidly as I could, hoping to overtake him. The sky was dark and threatening, and great masses of clouds with white caps, like sea-waves breaking over a bar, shut in the horizon and rested on the shoulders of the hills. Now and then a distant peal of thunder broke upon the stillness of the woods.

The leaves and bushes were wet with the rain of the previous night. As I emerged from the thicket that terminated with the public burying ground, which slopes its little mounds and hollows toward the southwest, where the sun (when we had one) looked in upon the repose of a population many times as large as that which moved about the farms and thoroughfares of our little town, I saw Oliver sitting astride the fence with his head down, as if busy with his own reflections. His angular figure was coiled up into a heap, and his brown linen coat was so nearly of the same color with the rails on which he was sitting that he looked at a distance like a huge knot or excrescence of the same.



"What are you thinking of, Oliver?" I asked as I approached.

"I was thinkin', Mr. Frank, heow snug all them folks lie there in the dark, and doan't care no more 'bout th' rain, or th' snow than th' stuns on their head an' feet. They doan't never git tired in their sleep, an' rub their eyes, an' turn over to rest their backs; nor wake up in th' night an' stretch their legs an' yawn till they git their reason stiddy, an' then tumble an' tumble, an' hear their pulse beat on their pillers, an' think 'bout their debts an' their dead friends, an' what they shall turn their hands tew, ter git suthin' t' eat an' drink to-morrer. They doant hev no head-aches, nor heart-aches, no burnin' o' hate an' spite koz their next door neighbor's house is painted white, or red, or yaller, when thearn's the color o' the wood. They aint pinched with poverty, nor bothered with riches. There's no drudgin' an' moilin' with them folks. They doan't hev tew hoe corn, nor dig taters, nor plow, nor sow, nor milk, nor dew no sort o' chores. Better'n all that, they ain't obleeged to make hay in th' rain. Better yit, they ain't stung by their consciences for what they might a' done an' didn't, nor kep' a wadin' an' a wadin' threw th' gret swamp of th' futur' with its bogs o' fectual callin', an' its sloughs o' lection, an' its unsartin' bul-rushes o' hopes an' fears 'bout th' next world—*them* folks ain't, whatever th' sperits that's left 'em may be, an' *they're* settled deown into *knowin'* an doan't hev ter believe nothin' neow. Whew!"

"Do you often think of such things, Oliver?"

"All th' blessed time, an' mebbly I dew hev some queer thoughts an' idees. I keep 'em a turnin' over in my mind like fish in th' water every minute when I'm awake; an' when I'm asleep, whew! heow I dream! Sally says it's the winkum I drink keeps sech a workin' in my head; but Sally's an incred'lous critter an' antagonistic in her judgments o' me. She charges me o' drinkin' double what I dew drink, an' then doubles th' effect it hez on me, an' then lays all my dreams to thet. But I tell her, it's bekoz I git the wheels in my head

a-rollin' when I'm awake, an' I can't stop 'em when I'm asleep ; an' I tell her ef she dreamed more she'd know more. She's pleggy sassy an' cunnin' is Sally ; so she says th' reason why I'm so rattle-pated in th' day time is that I never git no stiddy sleep, an' so my mind gits tired, an' none of my idees, sleepin' or wakin', ain't wuth nothin', only drunken crazy dreams. So she says *that's* why I'm a poor cuss an' hev ragged children. Mebby she's right—sometimes think she is. I love winkum ; that's trew. Come, let's jump off an' go on ter meetin'."

So we walked on through the green alleys that separated the head stones from the foot stones of the dead until we came to an ambitious looking fence, painted white, enclosing a nicely graded piece of ground about a hundred feet long and half as wide. This lot belonged to the Trowbridge family and contained five table monuments in a row, beginning at the east end and extending through the middle of the enclosure, flanked by smaller upright stones on either side. These tables marked the resting places of the Rev. Elijah Trowbridge and four Deacon Trowbridges his descendants, with their wives ; while the upright stones designated the graves of the daughters and younger sons of this distinguished family. The inscription on the monument of the author of "*Supplicia*" was in Latin, and commemorated the virtues of the departed saint in an epitaph of appalling length. The top of this laudatory page was illuminated by a cherub, who, from the disproportionate size of his head, must have been afflicted with a brain disease from his birth, and whose little wings appeared to have been broken in ineffectual flutterings to regain his native seat. Below the inscription, father Time labored with a scythe too mighty even for him to wield. This table was of brown stone, and had been imported from England. The four next in order were of American marble and construction, and bore inscriptions in English, margined by various artistic devices.

A few pine and hemlock trees brooded over the spot

and shrouded the dignity of the sleepers in a gloom scarcely less awful than the sanctity of their lives had been. There was a gate at the west end of the lot which was padlocked. Disregarding this obstruction, Oliver leaped over the rails and I followed. We walked to the eastern extremity, and Oliver sat down on the swollen head of the cherub, with a look of satirical attention, while I translated to him the Latin text.

"Neow tell us what it says 'bout his wife," said Oliver.

" 'Sarah relict of the same,' with nothing but her birth and death," I said, partly rendering and partly explaining. I went on and spelled out the four deacons—two of whom were done in very antique English, with quaint lettering. The christian graces of the male incumbents were all voluminously set forth. Their wives (deacon Juba had had four and deacon Aaron three) were easily disposed of, and the widows were described as "relicts," who were born and died. When I had finished reading the whole five, Oliver, who had appeared unusually thoughtful during the performance, suddenly broke into a loud laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" I asked.

"I was a-thinkin'," he said, "heow the parson an' th' deacons sucked up all th' christian vartews an' left their wives nothin' but th' shucks. Relicts! Ha! Ha! Ha! It's like my returns on a process—Non est 'ventus—Nully bony—day an' date added. I was a-thinkin' tew, heow many more deacons would go in here. Let me see; them monerments take up lengthways, with the little patches betwixt 'em, some ten foot apiece, doan't they?"

"Yes."

"Well, puttin' in Deacon Zalmon that'll make six on 'em that we are sure on; an' his son Zebulon is a comin' for'ard ez promisin' ez his father was at his age. He's purty sartin ter be a deacon; but we won't count our chickens afore they're hatched. As I was a-sayin', there's six on 'em sure, includin' the parson, with a prob'bility o' six more. Neow, six times ten

are sixty—then there's only room for four more, an' allowin' on an average tew relicts a-piece, that's the end of th' bobbin', an' they'll hev ter dig up some o' *us common folks* an' take in more land. Tew hundred years hence there'll be a-flaggin' of Trowbridges clean deown threw the yard, an' sech conch-shells ez those of mine an' Sally's 'll be scraped into a corner. All I ken say 'bout it is, taint Jeffersonian—'t aint de-mocratic. Oh what a time there'll be when they mortar Deacon Zalmon under one of them slabs an' letter him off! Wonder if he thinks of that! What a ransackin' o' th' Bible there'll be ter git suthin' good enough to epitaph *him* with! The pleg'll be ter find a saint fit ter liken him tew. There won't be no room for *his* relict. They'll hev tew put her on a little upright by th' side of her sister-in-law Huldy. 'Member Huldy doan't yer?"

"No, she died when I was very young."

"Hah! I knew her well enough. A weazel o' a black-eyed gal, was Huldy—prim an' solemn lookin' an' shy. She was awful on her doctrines. It was a dretful come-deown ter th' Trowbridges when her capers with Schoolmaster Stebbins cum to light. I burried th' little un myself in th' dark an' th' hull family tried to hush it up, but th' nurse was leaky an' eout come th' secret. Poor gal, she took on bad. She walked at midnight alone to th' grave ez long as she was able, an' then she pined an' pined an' died. She walked *arter* that for more'n ten years, an' some say she walks yit. Doan't see why she shuld, for the baby lies clus to her. But come, let's go neow; th' minister's a-goin' ter try it once more for clear weather, an' there's th' rain a-comin' neow!"

We started off at a rapid pace. I tried to introduce the subject of Dart and Charlotte, but th' wary constable would not entertain it, and I was obliged to give it up. When we arrived at the meeting house we separated, Oliver taking his seat in a side aisle pew, and I resuming my old place in the gallery with the young men of Dr. Stanyan's school. The minister was already in the pulpit. Deacon Trowbridge was in his

seat (the third pew on the right hand side of the middle aisle), with pencil and paper in hand ready to take down notes. The black shadows of the clouds gave an additional gloom to his face, and the flashes of lightning that gleamed across his silver-rimmed spectacles kept up an intermittent illumination that brightened the imposing solemnity of his features. His eye was fixed on the minister with a look of spiritual incredulity that no amount of evidence could convince.

The pulpit was very high, after the fashion of those days, and as I sat on the upper tier of benches I was opposite it, and almost on a level with it. The great meeting house Bible lay on its velvet cushion, and as soon as Dr. Stanyan opened it after the first prayer I noticed that it bulged up in the middle, as if there were some round substance under that part of it. At the same moment I observed several young men before me drop their heads on the backs of the benches in front of them, and I heard a suppressed titter from the same quarter, which I associated with the uneasy motion of the sacred volume as the minister turned over the leaves. The dark glance that he flashed at the benches before me, and the hush that followed, showed that he had tracked the mischief, whatever it was, to the right place. Of all the men I ever saw stand up in a pulpit, Dr. Stanyan was the most graceful and self-possessed in saying and doing startling things.

"Silence!" he said, looking again at the suspected quarter.

"Look at me, every one of you. I see *where* the mischief is; now let me find out *what* it is."

Slowly he took up the Bible and placed it reverently on the seat behind him. Then he lifted the cushion and disclosed a dead kitten, half-grown, coiled up into a ball. He replaced the cushion and the book, laid the kitten gently down by it, and gave out his text:

"From walking to and fro in the earth and up and down in it." As he shut the Bible when he announced his text, it was clear that the sermon was to be extemporaneous; at which discovery the delight of Deacon

Trowbridge was obvious enough. He rubbed his spectacles with his pocket handkerchief, examined the point of his pencil, drew down his upper lip, propped up his chin, brought his eyes to a focus as if taking deadly aim at some malignant heresy, and pressed his hand on his forehead until the mountainous ridge running across it was purple.

"The Devil," began the Doctor, "has in all ages manifested his power by various impersonations, according to the character of the work that he had in hand. In the rebellion that he organized in Heaven, he is represented as acting in his own person and in company with the most gifted spirits of evil. So in the temptation in the wilderness and on the pinnacle of the temple he took the form of a man. But there are things," he added, with an ill-boding twinkle in his eye, "which, with a sensible regard to his character as the prince of the power of the air, even the *Devil* will not do. These he leaves to his *imps*."

Here Deacon Trowbridge, shivering with horror, noted down the sentence as heretical, while the residue of the congregation looked eagerly for the application. It was forthcoming. The minister, lifting the kitten by the scruff of its neck, holding it out in his left hand at arm's length, and pointing at it with his right forefinger, resumed :

"Did Beelzebub, the prince, do *this* mischief? No! It was the work of such devils as once upon a time ran violently down a steep place and perished in the sea."

With these words he threw the offending object out of the window and went on with his sermon. The discourse was full of learning and eloquence. I had no idea of the wickedness and versatility of the Devil before. Deacon Trowbridge wrote down the sermon "a piece of blasphemy and presumptuous mockery from beginning to end."

Then followed the prayer with its much longed-for petition that the floods might abate.

It rained throughout the whole exercises and the

thunder peals and lightning were terrific. Deacon Trowbridge stood bolt upright through the prayer, looking at the streaked window panes with a lofty smile of satisfaction. This smile died with the echo of the Amen, which had scarcely been pronounced when the rain ceased and a burst of sunshine lit up the Meeting House.

"There will be no service this afternoon," said Dr. Stanyan, "as I deem it a work of necessity and mercy that the farmers and all those who are interested in securing their hay and grain should set about it at once."

The benediction was impatiently waited for, so anxious were the congregation to look at the weathercock. Out we streamed in a precipitate throng. At the door I saw Oliver Bramble on tiptoe with excitement looking at the meeting-house steeple and clapping his hands. He caught hold of me in an ecstasy and shook me as if he would have made an end of me.

"Look at him. Look at him with his head ter th' nor'west. Ef that ere rooster hain't got some privy of understanding, ez th' lawyers call it, with Stanyan, then there ain't no use of weathercocks nor ministers of th' gospel neither. Hoorah for Stanyan!"

"Hold your tongue, you blasphemer," said Deacon Trowbridge, with a flourish of his cane about Oliver's ears, "or I'll complain of you to-morrow for indecent and disorderly carriage on the Sabbath day."

Oliver retreated out of the reach of the stick, and repeated the words "indecent and disorderly carriage" in a very disrespectful manner.

"Carriage indeed! Look acrost th' green an' you'll see it afore your own door, let th' character on it be what 'twill. It looks to me like a gay vehicle an' decent an' orderly 'nough. I hope I may never serve another process ef taint Mr. Barker in one of his highs. I'm afeared he's eat up your dinner, deacon. He's ez hungry ez a wildcat when he holds his head like that."

Sure enough, there was my grandfather gaily dressed, in a handsome phaeton with a pair of dashing grey horses that reared and plunged so that the driver could

scarcely hold them, just waving his hand to Mrs. Trowbridge, who stood at the deacon's front door. Everybody knew what it meant.

Mr. Barker's late depression had suddenly given place to a fit of elation, and on such occasions he was in the habit of calling on his neighbors to prepare meals for him at unseasonable times. As soon as this change came over him he would be seized with irrepressible pangs of hunger and a disposition to assuage them wherever he was likely to find some luxury that he craved. On account of his respectability and a certain sympathy that everybody felt for him, as well as on account of his racy and extravagant wit, there was not a housewife for miles around who would refuse to lay aside everything and get him whatever he wanted as if he had called for it at an inn.

Deacon Trowbridge was fond of good dinners and his wife knew how to prepare one fit for a prince. Sunday was the right day to call at his house and Mr. Barker knew it.

As soon as the deacon was snugly seated in his pew that morning and had begun to solemnize his mind for the work in hand, Mr. Barker's phaeton appeared in the village and drew up in front of the Trowbridge mansion. The old gentleman alighted and called out to the driver:

"Peter?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall stop here until ten minutes before twelve o'clock. Give the horses a turn over the hills outside the village and mind you are back before meeting is out."

"Yes, sir."

As the carriage drove off, Mr. Barker, who felt that he had no time to lose, dashed up the steps, caught hold of the heavy door knocker and gave a loud summons. Mrs. Trowbridge soon made her appearance.

"Good morning, madam," said my grandfather, with such a beaming face and such a hearty shake of the hand as nobody could have resisted.



"So very glad to see you," said the lady, "pray come in, sir."

"That's just what I came here to do," said Mr. Barker. "How young and charming you look, madam. It seems to me that you are one of those persons who can never grow old, eh?"

"Oh! Mr. Barker," said Mrs. Trowbridge, "how can you say such things. But I am in good health, that must be owned, and I don't wear as much as some of my neighbors. Somebody's always sick here for me to run for, too. My daughter, Miriam, is sick to-day or you would not find me here!"

"Indeed!"

The old fox knew she was at home and the cause of it or he would not have called.

"You seem bright and well, too, Mr. Barker."

"Madam, for once you are mistaken. I am—I know my looks don't show it—but I *really am* a wretched—wretched invalid."

"Mr. Barker! what a pity! How sorry I am for you, What ails you?"

"Hunger, madam; I'm dying for a relish. I can't eat at home—my appetite is so poor, so full of whims, and my little wife is so broken, you know. Last evening your son Zebulon—fine fellow that, bids fair to make his father's place good in the church—went past my house with some young pigeons, and, Mrs. Trowbridge, I dreamed about those birds all night long. I will be frank with you. Said I to myself (in my dream, of course), Mrs. Trowbridge will pot these pigeons for the deacon's dinner to-morrow. Nobody *can* *pot* pigeons like her. If she knew how I suffer from the want of pigeons—the generous creature—(this is what I dreamed you see) she would be sure to gratify me; perhaps save my life, nobody can tell—by giving me a taste of them. There are five of them, (so I went on dreaming) and if I could happen in before the deacon comes from meeting, no one need know it, a bird or two wouldn't be missed."

Mrs. Trowbridge sighed. She was an absolute slave

to her husband and most of all in this matter of eating. He would ransack all the brooks for trout in the spring, and after she had cooked them to a turn, unless he had more than he could possibly eat himself, he never gave her any part of them but the tails. Just so it was in the perch and pickerel season, nothing but tails! The Deacon said the tails were sweeter and more delicate than any other part of the fish; and so of the game birds, she only got the legs and wings, unless there was game to throw away. Now what could she do with Mr. Barker? He was a dreadfully importunate man, that she had found out long before. She dropped her head during the recital of the miraculous dream, and when it was ended Mrs. Trowbridge sighed. A bright thought flashed upon her.

"Mr. Barker," she said, "the pigeons are not cooked yet and you are so *very* faint that you can't wait. I have some perch only caught yesterday. I could fry you some in ten minutes. What do you say to that?"

"Perch, by all means," said my grandfather, "for the first course, and by that time the pigeons will be ready. Mrs. Trowbridge, you are a woman of a thousand. Expedient—no, *faculty*, that's the word. As you say I can't wait for the pigeons without staying my stomach with the perch. Perch *and* pigeons will be just the order of it as you are kind enough to suggest."

She was caught in her own net. In trying to save one she had lost both. With many an inward groan and dreary forecasting of a gloomy future not remote, she laid the table and produced, first, two large perch, and then two of the five pigeons, four of which her husband was already yearning for, even in the intervals of his note taking, while Zebulon would claim the fifth as a perquisite. Ill-starred woman! She bore the disappearance of the fish with equanimity till even the very tails were gone. She was still buoyed up by the hope that the old gentleman's appetite would not hold out for more than one of the birds. But this gleam of consolation just flickered and vanished with the last

morsel of the second pigeon. A picture of perfect satisfaction was Mr. Barker seated at the table in the deacon's favorite arm-chair. He was full seventy years old, but not a wrinkle was seen on his face that morning, as he leisurely took his dinner diversified by sprightly anecdotes, of which he had good store, and witty hits at his neighbors, not forgetting my father, whom he was always hard upon when in the heroical state, and complimentary speeches to his hostess, whose health he drank so many times in very good Madeira that the decanter ought to have been filled for appearance sake. It was a pity that Mrs. Trowbridge forgot it, but there was some excuse for that. She had been a very pretty woman in her day and that had turned her head when she was young, and even now she was hardly forty years old. She had never been gifted except in cookery and good looks. Her husband was right when he said that she was absolutely ignorant of the phrase *Biblical Exegesis*, and knew nothing about the doctrines, except that she had a smattering, like most other women, of *special providences*. Those disabilities are some excuse for her not resisting the bland flatteries of Mr. Barker.

Indeed I never saw the female yet who could withhold her confidence from him, for he could make any woman go into a fit of laughter, and when a woman laughs (who tries to help it) she will usually end in being complaisant. So they ran on with a chit-chat so delicious to the lady that she entirely forgot the hour of twelve was approaching with all its terrible consequences.

Mr. Barker longed to linger over the recent illness of my mother and say pitying things about it, for in this way he could deal the heaviest blows at my father. In his elevations he was shockingly communicative, and talked about his family affairs a great deal too much.

"And what part does Frank take," said Mrs. Trowbridge, pressing this domestic topic. "I suppose he stands up for his mother. He looks just like her. If he wore petticoats I should take him for her at his age."

"Frank," said my grandfather slowly, as if constructing a scale of my moral and intellectual proportions, "is a quiet, well-intentioned lad enough. They say he has some learning, though he never lets any body know it. In business he might pass for a fool, but he isn't a fool. If that boy," he added in an oracularly grand manner,— "ever does ripen into a man—h'm—he'll be more of a man than his father. It is possible that if he should ever find his way to the top of a high mountain, he might look off and *see something*. But it is nearly twelve o'clock, Mrs. Trowbridge. You are impatient to see your husband, I know, or I would ask you to take a turn in the phaeton, but I know it's against your principles to go out on the Lord's day. Being an invalid, I am obliged to do it, you see. So I thank you for taking such good care of a poor sick friend and bid you good morning."

When Deacon Trowbridge saw Mr. Barker driven away from his house in such fine style, he hurried home with all possible expedition. I am indebted to hearsay evidence for the facts related in the foregoing interview as well as for those making up the following incident, but the witness was not to be called in question.

Deacon Trowbridge reached the house in a fretted state of mind which nothing could smooth down, while anything might aggravate it. Although he had added to the stock of proofs against Dr. Stanyan the dreadful permission just given the congregation to profane the Sabbath day by manual labor, still the minister had gained a victory over the people, to say nothing of the wind being in the northwest. It was a family trait with the male Trowbridges to treat women as a kind of domestic animal of a very mean order, and as soon as he entered the front door he put his dignity off with his cocked hat and ordered his wife to see that dinner was served immediately. She was in a flutter and he observed it, but made no allusion to it. With her he sat down and said a grace as long as two ordinary prayers with a forced composure that almost choked him. He

noticed no diminution in the supply of perch, which happened to be abundant, but when the cover was removed and the three pigeons were disclosed, he gave his wife one of his looks.

"What does this mean, Mabel? Zebulon was to only have *one*, I shall want *four* ; fetch me another !"

Fear is the cause of a great many falsehoods, and I am afraid if Mrs. Trowbridge could have seen a clear way out, she would have told one.

"I—I—have only three !"

"Don't prevaricate, Mabel, I know better. There are five, I counted them ; fetch me another."

"Two of them are gone."

"Gone?" echoed the deacon, as if the missing object had been a human soul suddenly sent to perdition. He was purple with rage to the very roots of his hair. "Gone—where did they go? Tell me the truth."

"They went—that is to say—they disappeared—on account of——"

With a stony smile and unmoving eyes her husband watched her helpless fluttering in the web of evasion and waited in silence.

At last with a dreadful spasm, out it came :

"Mr. Barker ate them !" When she had once begun she found herself unable to stop.

"He came here very pale and sick and said he should die if he didn't have them, and I gave them to him. I couldn't help it."

She was interrupted by Zebulon, who came in surly and hungry and sat down at the table. The deacon was still in a state of unutterable suppression. Zebulon was as sturdy as the author of "*Supplicia*," and not a bit afraid of his father. His coming in was like a sedative to the old gentlemen.

"Zebulon," said he, "I am glad you are here. You will understand the case. You have a family standing to keep up. You know how all the Trowbridges hate Prelacy, Arminianism, Antinomianism and Arianism. *You* have a head on your shoulders. *You* can think and reason ; you understand one doctrine

from another. *You* don't shelter yourself behind the heresy of good works. You know I am on the Watch-tower night and day going the rounds and the counter rounds to guard our Zion against the enemy who is trying to undermine her bulwarks. For months I have hardly eaten a quiet meal, and my Sabbath duties are enormous. This morning I could eat no breakfast."

"Only half a broiled shad, potatoes, and bread to match," said Zebulon curtly.

"Just so, my son; hardly enough to keep me alive. Well, I went to meeting. You know what happened there. The buffoonery of the minister must have shocked your religious sensibilities as it did mine. I labored hard all the morning, and I can truly say that I hardly drew a long breath. While I was taking notes of the sermon and the prayer, and sketching down that horrid incident about the cat, and the dreadful heresy about Sabbath-breaking, that rattle-brained prelatist, Barker, took advantage of my absence, drove up to my door in a disgraceful vehicle, and with the connivance of my wife, ate up my dinner. What do you say to that?"

"I say it can't be helped," said Zebulon, dryly. "As far as I am concerned, I'm glad of it. Mr. Barker is a good friend to me, and when he gets on his high-heeled shoes he must eat up *somebody's* dinner, and drink up *somebody's* wine. That's what I say."

"Wine," cried the deacon, "you don't mean to say, Mabel, that he has been at the Madeira too?"

"He was so faint I was obliged to give him a little," said Mrs. Trowbridge, emboldened by the presence of Zebulon.

The deacon glanced around at the side-board and saw what diminution had been made of the contents of the decanter. His indignation could no longer be controlled.

"Mabel," he said, turning to his wife, "what was your maiden name?"

"Mabel Hill."

"Where were you born?"

"On the lake-side near Oliver Bramble's."

"What were the condition and circumstances of your family?"

"We were humble, poor people," she replied falteringly.

"Yes, a poor degraded family," continued the deacon, enlarging upon her confession, "living as you very properly say among the Brambles, in a house the color of the wood, with a tumble-down chimney top, rags stuffed into the windows, a white-bean patch for a door-yard and a hop-vine to ornament your bed-room window. Never a pair of shoes did you wear except when I came to court you, the worse fool was I to do it. And here you are the mistress of a gentleman's house, living in luxury and squandering what *you* can't eat or drink on wine-bibbing Episcopalians and helping them to keep a prelatical carnival in my house on the Lord's day. This is what you do and expect me to put up with it. But I won't, I'll turn you into the street and let you beg again, do you hear?"

"I never did beg," said the poor woman, sobbing piteously and writhing under the sting of these brutal taunts, "and if I did go without shoes it was not my fault, and I could have bettered my condition in plenty of ways without marrying you and being the drudge in this house, that every body knows I am."

"Then you shall leave the house this very day and have an end of it," said the deacon, bringing his fist down upon the table with a bang, and rising and walking toward her as if his fury was not going to spend itself in words. "You go this very moment or I'll *help* you out!"

"Father," said Zebulon, at the same time getting up and stepping in front of his mother. "We have had enough of this."

"What will you do about it, you villain?"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said his son. "You may say whatever the Devil prompts you to say to her, father, nobody ever could stop your tongue and I can't

work miracles—but if you hurt a hair of her head or lay hands on her to turn her out of doors, I'll interfere. *Now* do you understand me?"

"You'll knock me down, I suppose?"

"I shall use just as much force as is necessary to accomplish this object. If that don't avail, I'll complain to a magistrate."

"I'll call one myself to-morrow and make my will," said the deacon, strangling with rage. "I can make you a beggar, sir, and if God spares my life I *will* do it."

"You can do everything with my consent except one. You *can't* lift your hand against my mother in my presence. Come, mother, get ready to go with me. While he is dictating his will to make a beggar of me, I'll help you to a lawyer and furnish him with a statement of facts to set up in a bill of divorce. Alimony is a comfortable thing to a woman who is turned into the street."

This was a new exhibition of the character of his son that Deacon Trowbridge was not prepared for. There was a resolution in the young man's eye that he had never seen there before. It brought his temperature below the boiling point. He stood there simmering and cooling in sulky silence. Still his stubborn nature held out lustily.

"You had better not try to bluster it out with me, sir," he said at length.

"Do I look like a blusterer?" asked Zebulon. "Master over your house you may be. Tyrant over the will of your wife and children you shall be no longer. I will blazon your shame and my mother's wrongs wherever there is an eye to read them."

Deacon Trowbridge faltered. He took a little inventory of his resources, of which his family and individual reputation were pretty large items. Then there was the affair with Dr Stanyan and the controversy about the parsonage. How could he afford to quarrel with his son at such a crisis? What should he do for a staff in his old age if Zebulon should carry out his threat?



Who would take the place of that faithful domestic, his wife, as cook and nurse and general household drudge? How would it punish her, to be put into possession of one-third of his property? Would she not be a martyr to be sighed over by women and pointed out as a model of long-suffering meekness, while he was a bug-bear on every hearth and a target for epigrams in the newspapers? He began to see the situation in its true light, and, finally, after holding back until the load was too heavy for his arms, by an awkward capitulation, and with many mental reservations, he ended the controversy in a sulky apology, ate his dinner in silence and digested it by the aid of a mug of flip.

## CHAPTER XV.

### DIPLOMACY.

THE relations between Dart and myself were not satisfactory. He had not called to see me at my father's since the vacation began, and whenever we met at Dr. Stanyan's or at Dr. Carew's his manner was frigid, and mine toward him, if it reflected anything of the bitterness of my heart, could not have been conciliating. As a member of Dr. Stanyan's family he was thrown, as I jealously imagined, into daily and hourly contact with Marcella, and what impression he had made upon her, or what secret understanding, if any, existed between them, her father's interdiction relating to the anonymous letter forbade me to inquire. I was fully convinced that whatever his intentions might be, he was pursuing both Marcella and Charlotte with earnest assiduity and divided his time about equally between them. That Charlotte was covetous of these attentions there could be no doubt, and that he found many opportunities for private interviews with Marcella I fully believed. So in my perplexity of mind, suppressing as well as I could the fears that tormented me, I dragged out the weary days. Marcella frequently visited Charlotte, and in following the object of my

search I often found myself at Dr. Carew's. Attracted there by this powerful magnet, I was admitted by the housemaid one evening and invited into the parlor to await the return of the young ladies who had gone out for a walk. I sat down and took up a book to while away the time. I read until it was nearly dark, when, without any previous warning, I was aroused by the unmistakable accents of a voice from the library.

"If you will not hear me, Charlotte, of course you must go on in your own way. It is a consolation that you will not go without a friendly caution."

"A disinterested monitor indeed," responded Charlotte in a high key. "I understand it perfectly well now. You are in love with him yourself. Your color shows it—your voice betrays it. That's what it all means."

"Will you listen to me, Charlotte?"

"No, I will not," said Charlotte vehemently. "Had I not loved him so blindly that I could see nothing, think of nothing, feel nothing but his presence, I should have known that you were under the same bewildering influences. Why have you kept it from me, only to reveal it by hypocritical accusations against him? Could you not fight it out with me? You might have won him. You are sly enough to outwit a poor little fool like me who never could keep anything to herself. But to come to me with the gossip of the village, and try to shame me with that! Fie, fie! I will never believe another word you say about him. I will do what I like, trust *whom* I like, go *where* I like, and believe in your disinterestedness as *little* as I like. You couldn't content yourself with Frank Everett, who has been ready to die for you ever since he was fourteen years old, but you must rob me and break my heart!"

Determined to remain no longer in the attitude of a listener to words not meant for my ears, I took advantage of this abrupt period, and, stealing to the front door, seized the knocker and gave a summons that effectually put an end to the dialogue. In a few moments Charlotte appeared with a crimson flush on her cheeks

which she had not been able to banish on so short notice. The angry emotions still contended in her face with the smile that tried to welcome me.

"Oh, Frank! How could you knock so loud and frighten me so?" she asked.

I made my apology as well as I could, with a guilty awkwardness that gave her time to recover her full self-possession.

"Well, come in," said she in her old bantering way. "I know that you don't come to see me. But I forgive you. Come in, *she's* here. I suppose I needn't tell you that."

I followed her into the library, staggering under the effects of the blows that I had received.

Marcella was sitting on the sofa in a dark corner of the room. She arose, came forward and gave me her hand without stopping to wipe away the tears that were streaming from her eyes.

"I am glad to see you, Frank," she said in a smothered voice. "You have come in good time to part us. We have been quarreling."

"What could drive two such friendly powers into collision?" I asked.

"That is a state secret not confided to neutrals," answered Marcella, quite in her customary manner.

"I have nothing to conceal," said Charlotte sharply. "You can publish it to the world if it suits you."

Brooding over what I had heard I made no inquiries, and the young ladies sat facing each other, Marcella with a sad look of remonstrance, Charlotte with a disdainful expression in her eyes, so unnatural to her that it shocked me.

The painful silence that followed was broken by a gentle knock at the door. I knew whose it was by a certain subtle, self-constrained delicacy of touch in it, as well as if I had seen the hand that made it. I knew it equally well by the sudden suffusion of Charlotte's cheeks and the pale composure of Marcella's lips. Dart glided rather than walked into the room, moved across it to the sofa where Marcella was seated, and

drew her hand into his as if by an irresistible influence before he addressed himself to Charlotte. Then he turned and met me with an audacious politeness as icy as his touch. Had the character of this meeting been judged of by any language that passed between us, it might have been thought that the parties to it were distant acquaintances. The conversation, beginning in commonplaces, flickered, died, and was rekindled, with awkward intervals of silence.

The contrast between the two girls was never more marked than now. Marcella was taller than she had given promise of being two years before, and had a roundness of figure and a presence as noble and imposing as her father's. The wavy brown hair excelled even his in softness and abundance, and the eye with the same indefinable color, which was neither hazel nor grey, had all the fullness and strength of his—all the introspective force attempered by the long shadowy lashes and quick sensibilities of woman. The ruddiness of complexion that she had derived from him, and that usually enlivened her face, had given place to a pure white. As I looked at her she seemed to be surrounded by an atmosphere of light that lifted her above me into inaccessible regions. There was a sadness in her eyes, not as of one about to pass a painfully just sentence or administer a well merited rebuke, but as of one who had exhausted every resource possible to her and was calmly awaiting a result foreseen and inevitable.

To my jealous eye, what an enigma was this beautiful face! Was the accusation that I had overheard indeed true? Was she only remonstrating with Charlotte in order to remove an obstacle from her own path? Was her beauty but a mask to hide her cunning, or was the voice really a note of warning?

As I have said, the contrast between these two young women was very striking. Charlotte was much smaller than Marcella, blonde, blue-eyed, and curly haired, a slender, graceful beauty, with intellect enough to give piquancy to a waywardness which was the joint handi-

work of nature and education. It is difficult to imagine a more sprightly creature, or one more completely given over to the promptings of impulse. She had always done what she liked, and whatever she did had an inspiration in it that foiled all attempts to restrain it. Her will was like the law that determines the current of a sparkling little brook, and wherever it gravitated young and old smilingly watched it. She had coaxed her father, wheedled her nurse, domineered over her mates and fooled her teachers all her life long; and not satisfied with having her own way in everything, had contrived to make them overlook, if they did not applaud, that which in persons of a different temperament, they would have openly condemned. She did not appear to be at all under the control of personal vanity. She even seemed unconscious of her beauty when every one else was enraptured with it. She only floated on it, as a bird does upon its wings, to difficult and dizzy elevations. She was not devoid of book learning, but the educational fabric that she had reared for herself was one of roofless arches and unpinnacled turrets, as if it had been built by the hand of a fairy and left ivy-mantled and incomplete on purpose for a ruin.

As she sat that evening, her eyes drooping, her cheeks flushed, her fingers helplessly grasping for the flounces of her dress, her figure swaying to every word and motion of my classmate, it was not to be disguised, indeed, it seemed that she did not care to conceal, that she had found a master at last, whose tyranny was absolute and more delightful to her than her former liberty. Clearly enough he was conscious of his power. Did he value the conquest that he had made? I looked at the immovable face of the man and tried to fathom his purposes. The steel-colored eye; the straight hair, jet black and glossy; the short curly lip the swarthy forehead, spacious without frankness; the towering neck, so haughtily blended with the finely-moulded chin, revealed only a proud self-involved purpose to subdue and hold in thrall whatever might seem worthy of subjugation.

If he valued anything beyond Charlotte, it was plain that he would strive for it. Whatever he should strive for, who so likely to win? It has always been a characteristic of mine to be dazzled with the personal beauty of men as well as women. I must have been born with this predisposition, and my solitary childhood probably fostered it. Had I lived on Prospero's island, I think I should have divided my childish worships pretty equally between Miranda and Ferdinand. The smallness of my own stature in childhood may have added to this homage, and induced me to assimilate to myself that quality in others which I did not naturally possess. I fell in love at first sight with Dart's personal beauty, and had never until lately been able to separate it from his moral qualifications. I had never thought of envying him for this possession any more than I would have envied an archangel for the clearness of his spiritual vision. I gloried in it, as a part of my own wealth. Even now I could not throw off the shackles of this allegiance, restive as the servitude made me.

Green wood will at last simmer itself into a blaze, and so will uncongenial words when thrown together finally light up into a glow. Thus we found it to be on this occasion. With untiring address, now expended upon Marcella and now upon Charlotte, with an occasional bait of concession thrown out to me, Dart at length succeeded in warming up the damp atmosphere and reinstating himself as the leader in our ring of social conversation. He roused Charlotte's fancy by short excursions into grottoes, caverns and orange groves, and amused her with reminiscences of his boyhood in that southern land which he knew was an uncertain realm of fable to her. He piqued her into discussions of difficult propositions, still skirting the borders of the unknown, and allowed himself to be vanquished that he might defer to her by graciously acknowledging his defeat. So equally were his attentions divided between them that I found it impossible to discern on whom he bestowed his preference. He even went so far as to conciliate me by retouching in the liveliest colors of description some

of the incidents of our college life, until the room resounded with a chorus of laughter.

At last Marcella rose to go, and both Dart and I walked with her to her father's door. There we took leave of her, and Dart proposed to accompany me in a walk through the fields and woods. We set forth together toward the lake, he taking the lead, and rattling on in his seductive way with a sprightliness so cheery that it carried me back to the time when we were school boys and no shadow had yet come between us.

At last we came to the lake shore, and rambled on under the hemlock glooms, past inlets and caves and shining strips of sand with flakes of isinglass glittering in the moon. He talked of the future, and the past, what he would be, what he would do, what he would win; until the rustle of the vine leaves shadowing the spot where the brook issues from the lake jarred upon my nerves with associations that he did not appear to share. Here we sat down and he went on fondling the brook and calling it by pet names as if it were a child. I heard, but did not heed him, for my mind was busy with the future of Charlotte, with the future of Marcella, with my own future.

"What are you thinking of?" he asked abruptly.

"Of the cloud over the moon," I said.

"It is gone now; let me look at you."

The tranquil light flooded my face, and twinkled on the glossy leaves of the old maple as he spoke. He put his hand on my shoulder and took a long steady look at me.

"Something ails you, you are pale. No bodily ailment, perhaps, but there," he said, putting his hand over my heart. "Frank, you are in love. I have known it for weeks. I have known it ever since you proposed to Marcela, on the ledge, and she refused you."

"Has she told you so?" I asked in much agitation.

"No."

"How do you know it then?"

"You told me so."

"I?"

"Yes, you have told me so twenty times this very evening. You tell me so every time you look at her. Every drop of blood in your frame has gone into your face and is a burning witness against you now."

"Is there anything strange in that?" I asked.

"Yes, it is strange that you should be such a fool as to love a woman whose heart is preoccupied. You stare—you tremble—shall I tell you?"

"Tell me."

"I am going to marry her myself."

"You?"

• "Yes, why not?"

Choking and gasping, I tried in vain to answer. At last I stammered out:

"Have you obtained her consent?"

"Don't ask me that, Frank, I've told you too much already. You have told me nothing except by your looks. Tell me in terms: do you love her?"

"With all my heart and soul."

"Then I will answer your question. I have obtained her consent."

I looked in his face and saw the triumphant smile that illuminated it. A chill thrilled over me like a cold wave. My heart seemed to stop beating.

The lake, flashing the fire of myriad stars upon its bosom, seemed climbing the wooded shores. I was speechless.

Gently he took my hand—pityingly he looked into my face.

"Poor boy," he said, "I have hurt you. I am sorry for it. Had I loved you less, I should have let you go on nursing this passion until its roots, clinging about your heart, had stifled it. It is better as it is. You will thank me for it some day."

He dipped his hand into the brook where it trickled over the massive root on which we sat, forming a pool, and bathed my forehead and cheeks as if I had been a helpless child, and repeated the words:



"I have hurt you, Frank ; I couldn't help it. I love her. Don't you see I couldn't help it?"

He supported me tenderly until I came a little more to myself. Then, catching at the last straw, I asked him :

"Have you spoken to Dr. Stanyan about it?"

He hesitated, glancing suspiciously at me.

"Since you ask me, if it will comfort you," he said, "I answer, No."

Instantly I started to my feet.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"Home."

"Not alone?"

"Alone."

"Without shaking hands, Frank?"

I gave him my hand.

"Tell me that you forgive me," he repeated.

"Good night," I said, and with icy lips we parted.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A VISIT.

THE next morning when I awoke from the little glimmer of sleep that had visited me so late that I had thought it would never come, my mother was sitting by my bedside watching me. She had not fully recovered from her recent illness, but was able to attend to her household duties. I had never seen her look so lovely. She arose as soon as I opened my eyes, put her arms around my neck and kissed me. She kept clinging to me a long time and fondling me as if she could never be satisfied.

"You sleep late," she said.

"Late, but not early," I answered. "I have slept but little."

"I know it. Now tell me all about it, dear. You know you are nothing but a baby and never will be anything else to me. My knowing anything that troubles you is just like your knowing it. Besides if I

share it with you, it will make the weight lighter. Now tell me."

I would not deceive her, but could not bring my mind to speak to her at first on so delicate a subject.

"Not this morning, mother; I am tired and distracted. Wait a little."

"It will rest you, Frank; it will soothe you. The sooner you do it the better for us both. You know many things that I do not. You are a prodigy in some things, but in matters of this sort I may be wiser than you are."

Thus encouraged, I told her all the particulars of my story except those relating to Dart's communication. She listened with the tenderest expression of sympathy. The brunette flush came back into her wan cheek and warmed it with the remembered light of an earlier time. She was only thirty-nine years old and looked much younger than she was.

"Poor child! just as I hoped, just as I feared. Marcella looks upon you as one too nearly upon her own level. Women mature their ideals earlier than men, and young women look forward and upward to something beyond and higher than themselves. They cannot take a retrospect. Life has so much to unfold to them that they do not find time for that. Marcella has not yet waked up to the consciousness that you are a man; that you have attainments superior to hers, a range of thought higher than hers, a near future that will satisfy her ideal and give it a form that it can inhabit. That form she will perhaps never see with her own unassisted eyes. Her father, her friends, the world will see it, and that will help her to see it. She must be disenchanted of the idea that you are a boy before she can be enchanted with the spell that mature man throws over woman. For the woman, no matter how gifted, never reaches her best except through the fellowship and sympathy of the man. Indeed the loftier her gifts the more glaringly her incompleteness will show both to herself and others. That is a limitation of the sex. Marcella is not exempt from it. Courage!

In a year you will take your degree in the graduating class. Do your best. I do not mean break down your health by severe application, but don't impair your powers of application by brooding over this refusal. You do not know the cause of it yet. It may rest on a basis of sand that will slip from under it."

I shook my head and sighed. I had not told her all, I could not.

"I fear," I said despondingly, "that her affections are bestowed elsewhere."

"On whom?"

I was silent.

"Do you fear Dart? I know you do, but I do not. She would never take such a step without her father's consent, and he would never give it. Besides she does not and never could love Dart. At any rate she does not now."

Impossible to be true as I felt this assertion to be, it gave me a delusive comfort, like the temporary effect of an opiate.

"You have kept something back from me, Frank. What is it?" she said, in her most winning manner.

She saw the pain and perplexity that she was giving me and gracefully retreated.

"You can't tell me? Very well—then I must be satisfied with a part of your confidence. A little is a great deal to a mother. Now with one more allusion to what I have already hinted at I will drop the subject for the present. You have cause to know from my late condition of mind and from the deluded state in which your poor grandfather now is, that you have in your mental and moral frame some dreadful proclivities that you must struggle against or they will crush you. If you brood over this trouble it will involve you in chains—links of iron—that neither a sense of duty, nor will, nor passion, nor shame can break. Oh! my son, if you knew the weight of such chains, how they chafe the limbs, and how their rust rankles in the blood, you would shudder at the first coming on of that moral lethargy, beginning in waking dreams, the

chaff of an indolent mind, and ending in despair and self destruction. I know the insatiate craving of the family. We need sympathy, gentle handling, commendation, a want that we derive from some intense individuality, or series of them, now dead but still living in us. But if we cannot be ministered to by such medicines we must minister to ourselves. Such is the inheritance of the Barkers. It is a wretched patrimony, but it is ours."

She sat a few moments with her hands pressed against her forehead as if to shake out a flock of these dreadful visitors from her own mind, and then said with a sudden transformation of look and manner :

"But Uncle Gilbert says it is nine o'clock, and now I will fetch your breakfast."

She tripped out of the room as she spoke, just as she might have done in her girlhood.

With what love my eyes followed her, how my heart kept time to her footsteps on the stairs, I hope the incidents of this story may make real as they unfold her character. With a few preliminary arrangements, the putting on of a dressing-gown I remember constituted a part of them, I made an invalid of myself in good earnest and took my breakfast in bed.

"Partridge," said my mother as she set the dish on the little reading table. "I saved my part for you."

"That is always your way, and I mean to punish you by not eating a morsel of it," I said, pulling one of her ears with ferocious expressions of resentment.

"When will you learn to treat your mother with respect?"

"When she grows up and conducts herself like——"

"Like an ogre and devours everything herself? There, Frank, it is a young bird. I broiled it myself, and here is your coffee! Sit up."

While I was eating my breakfast she was saying all kinds of amusing things to divert my mind. I recollect one of her entertainments was the story of a giant trying to annihilate a dwarf, who turned upon the monster and killed him. The relation was couched in

terms suited to the capacity of a child six years old and had an allegorical meaning that was very much enhanced by her dramatic, funny way of narrating it. It was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"It is Dart," I said.

"How do you know that?"

"I know his way of doing everything."

"Will you see him? You look poorly; I think I will send him away."

"I must see him. I want to speak to him."

She withdrew and soon after I heard his step ascending the stairs. It was as regular as a grenadier's and as light as a woman's. It was always a mystery to me how a person so strongly made could go about so noiselessly. He moved across the room just as he had done in Dr. Carew's parlor, the evening before, and took my hand before I could offer it to him. He seemed very much shocked at my appearance.

"I could not sleep for thinking of you, Frank," he said, with an air of deep concern. "I am always doing something hasty, something to be ashamed of. If I could only stop jumping at conclusions and let things take their course! You would have found it out in time, and in the meanwhile you would have gained strength to bear it. Frankness is commended by simple people, but I always lose by it. I fear it has lost me a friend in you."

I began to relent, but as I had a subject on my mind that I was resolved to broach to him, I would not allow myself to lose this opportunity.

"William," I said, commanding myself as well as I could, "I am glad to see you. I wish to speak to you on a matter that distresses me very much, and I beg you will be open with me. It is an affair no way relating to myself, but one in which I am deeply interested."

He was evidently afraid when I began that I was going to call up the subject of the previous evening, and felt quite buoyant on finding that he had escaped.

"It is a dreadfully long preamble, Frank, if the thing doesn't concern you. But go on, I'm waiting."

"It does concern me, I cannot tell you how deeply."

"Oh! But don't keep me in suspense."

"It relates to Charlotte Carew."

"Well?"

"You know she is a relative and dear friend of mine. We played together when we were children. She is a beautiful, willful, defenceless creature, with lively susceptibilities and an imagination that flies away with her judgment. She is credulous and confiding and might easily be led astray by any one whom she loved. She loves you and you are leading her astray."

A flash of anger shot across his face.

"What do you mean," he said, rising and setting down his foot fiercely upon the floor as if he were crushing something.

"Simply this: you have already told me that you are devoted to another; that irrevocable pledges have passed between you. If this is true—if——"

"Do you doubt my word? Do you imply that I fabricated what I told you?" he asked, advancing and stooping over me in a threatening attitude. "Be explicit if you please."

"I will be explicit," I said, "if words can make me so. I do not imply that you told me a falsehood. It is you who imply that by putting an evil construction on my words. I repeat it, if that story which I accepted as true, be really so, you are leading Charlotte Carew hopelessly, cruelly astray."

His temper was beyond his control now as I was willing it should be, for I had determined not to lose mine and felt sure that he would betray himself.

"It is a lie," he said, clinching his teeth. "It is a lie! Resent what I say if you dare!"

"It would be a poor test of courage," I replied, "for a puny fellow like me to try to chastise anything, however coarse, that a bully with fists twice as heavy as mine might say to me; besides it is foreign to my purpose. Now if you will allow me I will go on and prove what I say by evidence that would not be worth much in court, but which will be enough to con-

vince you, at least, that I am not ignorant of the subject that I am speaking of."

I believe he was very much surprised at my provokingly quiet manner and thought that he had gone too far.

"Suppose your accusation to be true," he said; "What right have you to make it? What business is it of *yours* what I do?"

"I have already told you that Charlotte is my friend. She is my cousin too. It is proper that I should protect her."

"Has she no natural protector then?" he asked.

"She has a father to whom I will appeal in good time, if your conduct makes it necessary."

"You dare not appeal to him."

"You had better not tempt me. Unless I have assurances from you that I think I can depend upon, I will do it this very day."

He must have seen that I was determined to carry my threat into effect and he was evidently not prepared for it.

"What proof have you of any impropriety of conduct on my part?" he asked.

"You haunt her with your presence night and day. You take long walks with her at improper hours, and in secluded places. You expose her to the scandal of an idle neighborhood. You abuse her confidence with delusive promises, and her father's by visiting his house in his absence and contrary to his wishes."

"This is boyish declamation, not proof," he replied; "confess now that you are jealous and spleenful and trying to pick a quarrel with me. I defy you to name a time, or a place, or a word associated with the motives that you impute to me."

"On Wednesday evening you were alone with her on the shore of the lake and did not return until a late hour. Do you deny that?"

"I am waiting for proofs to support your allegations. I shall not submit to be catechized," he said. "Go on."

"On Thursday evening you met her again in the

same secret haunts and under the same tree where we separated last evening. You proposed to her that she should desert her father's house and fly with you."

I had pierced him with a keen weapon. I could see that he felt the wound, but he soon rallied and fell back into his old frankness of manner.

"Frank," he said, "if I didn't know that you are twenty years old I should believe that you were only half that age. It seems that you have been watching me and lurking about the woods to overhear what I have said. I forgive you for that."

"You have no cause to forgive me, for I have never done it."

"Very well, no matter. If you had done so I should not have resented it. You are the most innocent creature of my acquaintance. If you had traveled more you would have ripened faster and known more of the world. As it is, let me ask you whether it is probable that any one in my circumstances would be likely to complicate his affairs with two serious marriage engagements at the same time?"

"Not serious ones, no; your levity is what I complain of."

"You are giving yourself a great deal of needless anxiety, and attributing to me motives that never actuated me. The conversation that was overheard by your informer was either misunderstood, or falsely repeated. It was only a part of a little piece of dramatic acting which Charlotte herself put into my head and which I helped her to carry out. We had observed that we were followed in our perambulations about the lake shore, and she proposed that we should extemporize a theatrical entertainment to astonish the eavesdroppers. You know that is just like her defiant way of treating intermeddling persons. Like a thoughtless fool as I am I seconded her humor. If you like to ask her, you can do so, and she will confirm my account of the transaction. I confess that I have done wrong, and, as it is painful to you, I will say that nothing but the most perfect propriety shall ever again charac-



terize an interview between your pretty cousin and myself."

He said a great deal more to the same effect, with such protestations of honest intentions and such promises of future good behavior that I almost believed him. As was always the case he got the better of me and left me discomfited in a suit which I had myself instituted.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE IDEAL IN THE REAL.

"GOOD evening, Stanyan. Come in," said Dr. Carew, as he met the clergyman at his own door. "Glad you are at home. I want to talk with you, doctor."

"Professionally?"

"Yes," said Dr. Stanyan, walking into the parlor and seating himself in an arm chair. "On matters relating to my profession not yours."

"Ah! Are you going to preach?"

"No."

"Good. You know I never hear you on Sunday, and not knowing to what extent I could control myself, I'm glad you are not going to tempt me. But I'm happy to see you. I have endured a good deal from you lately; more than I would from anybody else. I have read the book that you lent me."

"Edwards on the Will?"

"Yes; you don't believe me, but I have."

"What do you think of it?"

"That it is a series of stupendous fallacies; that it makes your God more arbitrary than Jupiter, and man more doomed and abject than Prometheus. What do *you* think of it?"

"Just as I do of Dr. Edwards' treatise on the Affections, of all his works in short. I did not give you the book to convince you. I knew it could not do that. I wanted to astonish your skepticism—a wondering skepticism is a kind of faith. It is broken ice. The

fragments may unite, but they never will be firm again. It is the glossy smoothness that shows it impregnable."

"Would not melting it be more effectual?"

"That is a cure for young sinners."

"But you evade my question I repeat what do *you* think of the work?"

"And I answer again, just as I do of his other works. If you admit his premises he is logically unanswerable. He moves through the Providence of God and the destinies of man with a sweep more irresistible than any other dialectician of modern times, but he fails to convince me on many points, because he does not adapt himself to the conditions and wants of human nature; at least of my human nature. I have not time to explain myself now, but I can truly say that I have derived more instruction from this writer than from all other philosophers and metaphysicians put together. Where he least satisfies me he most humbles me with a consciousness of my own inferiority."

"You were right in supposing that Edwards would astonish me. I examine him as a doctor should, simply to find out what ails him. Supposing myself called on to prescribe for such a man, I should look at him, feel his moral and intellectual pulse, and say to myself, in that metaphorical jargon of yours, this is a lunatic angel, hopelessly incurable, unless there be mad-houses in Heaven. The *disease* is so deeply seated that it may be said to be the *normal* condition of the patient. There is a terrible asceticism about him that would induce him voluntarily to add his individual life to the ninety-nine one-hundredths of the inhabitants of the earth whom he so resignedly sacrifices to his God. His simplicity of feeling, and his cunning in the use of his intellectual weapons, strangely as they contrast, are those of a madman. His imperturbable logic, keeping every link of the chain at white heat as he drags it on from cause to effect through that dim labyrinth beginning in chaos and ending in infinity, belongs to a madman. In a mere vulgar sense I know that the term does not

apply to him. This gifted creature was in all the offices of life, gentle, confiding and loving. As a father, brother, citizen, friend, he was perfectly sane. But when you bring him within the spherical influence of his system, he is the *representative* lunatic of that epidemic madness now ravaging New England. Then the clouds gather, the mountains frown, the earth trembles. All nature and God, its author and end, who made it and us for His own glory and aggrandizement, are all wrapped in impenetrable gloom. Amid all these terrors there is discernible one narrow path, inaccessible except to a few scattered and toiling pilgrims who are climbing upward to high gates, made visible only by lightning flashes and the swords of cherubim. But after all, his teachings are the legitimate fruits of your faith. He is as sane as any of you. I can't help splitting my sides with laughing at you, but, nevertheless, I drift about with you, bumping my head against your definitions, doctrines and distinctions until it gets as mad as a theologian's. Now tell me in hearty earnest do you believe these things? Let us see how much we have in common?"

"Well," said the clergyman, "I believe in one creating intelligence, who rules the spiritual, moral and physical world; do you?"

"What else?"

"I believe in Jesus Christ."

"As God or man?"

"As both."

"There we diverge," said the doctor. "I will concede that He was the best type of manhood—perfect if you like, but I cannot conceive of a God subject to the limitations of growth, suffering, disease, death."

"These were conditions of His humanity," replied the minister. "I, on the other hand, cannot conceive of a God who would not carry these burdens, nay, heavier ones, if need were, and if any could be heavier, to save His children from death, or perfect them in their development."

"I can see in Christ nothing more than I can *imagine*

that a *man* might attain," rejoined Dr. Carew. "You ask me if any other man *has* attained it? I answer by a question. Did ever any poet live his ideal life?"

"No, and the answer shows the fallacy of your theory, and proves that Christ was not a mere man," said Dr. Stanyan. "He did what the poet, the artist, the reformer, the founder of states, the philosopher, the seer never did or can do. He *lived* His ideal life in sober, honest *literalism*. Not a conception of the possible good, not a gleam of light that dwells with the Infinitely Just, the Infinitely Holy and Wise, but He lived in it, never looking up to it as something to strive after and imitate, but always on a level with it, making the *possible, real*; forming it into parables, shaping it into rules, carrying it into the wilderness, into the temple—to the cross; feeding upon it as His daily bread, thus converting infinite *vision* into infinite *being*."

"I admit his superiority to all *other* men," interposed Dr. Carew.

"Yes," said the clergyman, "and in doing that you forget that His superiority to all men known to history was one not of *degree* but of *kind*. The best and brightest example of manhood differs from the rest of the race only in degree.

"The poet is occupied with tropes and seemings, the painter with colors, forms and groupings; the philosopher with systems; the statesman with maxims, experiences, theories; the hero with chivalries and strategies. All these have their motives revolving in the little orbit of their own individualities supported by precedents and experiences of other men, and tending to mere earthly ends. Jesus has no theories, no syllogisms, no school logic, no colors, no precedents, no limitations, no *self* to look after. The truth that he teaches *that* He is, He is the immortality that He preaches, the eternity that He illustrates, the God whom He represents. All things that men prize, are dross to Him. Money, fame, kingdoms, temporalities; He counts them all for naught. The line of His thoughts, the sphere of His action, is perfectly unique. Let the best

man in the world try the experiment of confining his thoughts and motives for a single day within the regulations that Christ found to be natural to him ; how soon the brightest eye would turn away from its object to more familiar and more humanly pleasant ones. Plato would glance aside from his meditations to sip the bubbles in the academic wine-cup. Socrates would be distracted by domestic disturbances, and the necessity of sacrificing to Esculapius. Dante would turn to the fascinations of Beatrice ; Milton to disputations upon king-craft and divorce. They cannot continue in one stay. In this respect they are no better than common men. As they are attracted by a greater multiplicity of subjects, perhaps they are even worse. Jesus alone looks at the immortally pure and good with an untiring gaze. With Him alone knowledge, thought, imagination, truth, are embraced in one term—personal existence."

Dr. Carew listened with attention until his friend had concluded, and then said with warmth:

"It is a comfort to find such enthusiasm in a full grown man. At any rate you believe what you say and that is something. How you manage to retain such a child-like frankness I cannot understand."

"It is by believing *in a child*," responded the clergyman. "I only follow the example of the wise men from the East. The heart that the new-born star shines upon can never grow old."

"What would I not give for such a faith," said Dr. Carew. "But how do you reconcile with God's justice the everlasting punishment dealt out to the heathen before and since the Atonement is supposed to have gone into operation?"

"I never tried to do it," said Dr. Stanyan, "for I don't believe in any such arbitrary doctrine. God holds no man responsible for what he has not the ability to know and do. The plan of redemption was a part of His original scheme. It was at once prospective and retroactive, covering the whole sum of human existence. The sacrifice was as effective for those who

were ignorant of it, *in their degree*, as it was for Peter, James and John. We have no more right to charge God with wasting human souls than with wasting the lower animal existence, the countless generations of flowers that have drunk the dew and exhaled with it, or the myriad succession of forest trees that have soared towards heaven, and then fallen and resolved themselves into their original elements upon the spot where they grew. Not one of all these existences has ever perished from the memory of God; not one of them but has contributed its feature to the perfection and unity of His providence. Science deals honestly with these; nay, even with the strata of the rocks and the sands of the shore. It is in the contemplation of his own destinies alone that man's selfishness questions and maligns the purposes of God. We do not think of doing this when we speak of man in his connection with the affairs of this life. Whoever should venture to question the free agency of the murderer, the burglar, or the thief, to kill, to break, to steal, or to abstain from doing these things would be called a madman. But when we deal with spiritual matters our blindness, ignorance, pride and self-will cut us loose from all moorings and leave us to drift upon reefs and dash against rocks. If the reasonings of the skeptic were applied to the common affairs of the world it would drop into barbarism as a stone sinks into the water. Commerce would perish, states would fall to pieces, city walls would topple down, books would moulder in libraries, morals and customs would die out and naked savages would again dispute the possession of the earth with dragons and beasts of prey."

"There you are," said Dr. Carew, "going off into another rhapsody."

He sat a few moments looking at the ceiling, as if his eyes were trying to pierce it, and drumming upon the table with his fingers. At last he said :

"I can't take any more of *this* to-night, Stanyan. What you say is very plausible. I have tried very hard to see things as you do. Indeed I have."

"You try too hard! You make so much of them, and place them so near your eyes, you can't make anything of them. You have read Edwards. I am glad of it. But don't do it again. Leave him and Howe and Owen alone. Begin with Jesus Christ. Begin with loving as a child loves his mother. Reason will follow love, for reason is finite, love is infinite. The iron filings will creep up to the magnet and cling to it. Tell me that you will read the words of Christ and trust to them without trying to understand them."

"I will try not to try; but it will be only wasting time."

So the Christian and the skeptic sat gazing into each other's eyes as a waking man and a somnambulist might, while the katydids sang in the shade trees and the evening breeze rippled the window curtains. A tear glittered in the dark eye, a subdued softness beamed in the grey.

"Stop doing *that*, Stanyan. I can't stand it."

Thereupon they clasped hands and both sat awhile like motionless children, listening for the recurring of a mysterious sound that had taken them unawares and died away before they could catch its meaning.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ATMOSPHERES.

ROSY red sunbeams looked into Dr. Carew's bedroom window. He had passed a night of wakefulness and helpless dreaming, such as he had not known for years. He hastily dressed himself and walked to the window. The breeze had proved to be the earlier riser of the two, and was already wide awake, dallying with the foliage of the shade trees and rolling into larger drops the quivering particles of dew. A few scattered birds flew hither and thither content with letting fall snatches of half forgotten music, so different from the full-throated song that cheered the spring, that they seemed other than they had been three

months before. The broken clouds looked cold and grey, except where the sun warmed them, as it pierced through the prison bars of night.

Wrapped in his long dressing gown, his thin hair scarcely whiter than his cheeks, his eye wandering, his lips compressed, Dr. Carew left his room, crossed the hall and paused before the door of Charlotte's chamber, his thumb upon the latch, his whole frame trembling.

So stealthy was his look, so irresolute his attitude, he might, but for the tender solicitude in his face, have represented guilt invading the sanctuary of sleep. He might have been Dr. Carew's father as well, so old had he grown within a few short hours. So might a phantom stand, with bloodless fingers, awaiting the dissolving of the spell that kept it from passing some prohibited limit. Slowly he opened the door and entered the chamber. It was so closely curtained that darkness still lurked there almost as if there was no day in the east. His eye soon accommodated itself to the shadowy light. He approached the foot of the bed, and not daring to touch it lest he should awaken his daughter, stood with his hands behind him, in a stooping posture, looking at her.

She lay resting her head upon one arm as children do, while the other was lying outside the coverlet slightly curved, with the fingers half shaded by the light curls that draped the rosy cheeks and snow-white forehead. Her regular breathing proclaimed how gentle and profound was her sleep.

The room grew lighter as he gazed at her, as if her beauty were a lamp of alabaster struggling with the darkness. It lighted up the old man's memory, too, far down through difficult passages and winding paths from her birth hour; gleaming on the forgotten urns of things long dead. How lovely did that light rest on them; how soft, yet how distinct, was every outline. Were these incidents in the life that he supposed long ago to have vanished, still folded up in the slender form before him, maintaining there a



spiritual existence to be perpetuated into an immortality of a larger growth; or were *they* and the form itself and the future that they promised only parts of a dream? His eye glanced back into remote regions and lovingly lingered there. His courtship, the wedding, the few happy months of married life, the sick bed, the funeral, he saw them all again. Charlotte! he said to himself. Which Charlotte? Was it the mother or the child? Was she the living or the dead? In the perturbation of his soul it seemed as if he could only bring himself back to a sound consciousness by shouting out the loved name, Charlotte! But he uttered no audible word. Scarcely did he breathe. His thoughts alone called upon the name, and the echo died in an atmosphere wherein the outward ear feels no pulse of sound. But in that other atmosphere of reciprocal presences her personality met his—met it without recognizing it and trembled.

She turned and rested herself on her shoulder, shading her face with her hand. Her lips moved. She muttered something brokenly in her sleep. Then she spoke audibly one word, "William!" She too was dreaming. Her own voice awakened her. She sat upright, she opened her eyes, and in the morning twilight cried out in terror at the gray apparition standing by the bedside. Could it be her father? Then she pulled him down to her, threw her arms about him and hid her face on his breast.

"What an ogre you are to frighten me so. If I were a spirit of power enough I would open the door of some enchanted hill and make a gnome of you. Servitude, everlasting servitude! Only think. As it is, you are nothing but a night owl with those bright unresting eyes and must keep your liberty. What is it? What ails you, father?"

She stared at him with keen concern, and pinched the wrinkles out of his cheek with her pink finger tips.

"Out with it!" cried the spoiled child.

He drew in his breath and took her hand.

"You are going to say something dreadful," she

said. "I never saw you look like that. Kill me, father. Don't *say* it."

"Charlotte!" Tears stood in his eyes. She had seldom seen such tokens there. "Charlotte, you are keeping something from me. Don't do it any more. Confess that you love him. I am not going to blame you."

The crimson shame mounted from cheek to brow. She drooped her head to hide it. She lifted her eyes to reveal it.

"I was not ready to speak to you about it yet. But it would come to that in the end, it might as well be now as then. Yes, father, I love him."

"I thank you for being downright with me," said the old man. "I had no right to fear that you would waylay me to stab me with concealed weapons, but I did fear it. Once more have you promised him?"

"I have promised nothing."

"Will you promise *me* something, Charlotte?"

"If you don't ask too much. Anything that I can perform; but I'm very weak, father. Be sure you don't ask too much."

"I will begin," said her father, "with a light burden; something that you can carry. Promise that you will not see him for the next two weeks."

"I promise."

"One more, Charlotte."

"That is enough."

"No, one more; promise that you will never promise him anything without my consent."

"And will you promise to consent?"

"Not now."

"Then I answer, not now."

"Promise me that if I can prove to you that he is unworthy, you will never promise him anything."

A cloud of anger darkened her face.

"Prove it to me that he is unworthy?"

She broke into a fit of scornful laughter.

"Yes, Charlotte."

"I'll promise that, too, only *I* am to weigh the evidence and decide on my own judgment."

She laughed again, but less bitterly. Her father saw that he had reached the limit.

"Now I will leave you. Good-bye."

He kissed her, but she did not return the caress, and he walked out of the room without looking behind him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### TWO CIVILIZATIONS.

DR. CAREW felt that he had much reason to congratulate himself on what had passed between him and his daughter. He had curbed the natural impetuosity of his temper and had indulged in no violence of language. He had nothing to accuse himself of, nothing to explain. It had never before occurred to him that any relations could exist between Charlotte and William other than those that arise out of an ordinary acquaintanceship, such as exists in country villages where young persons who possess the requisite culture are thrown together without much reference to the future. He had not looked forward to the possibility that his daughter could ever be separated from him, or that her womanhood was outgrowing the narrow limits of the parental sphere. To him she was only a child. It is likely that no applicant for his daughter's hand, however unexceptionable, would have been kindly received. He had devoted his life to her and his sensibilities demanded an equal sacrifice on her part.

But he had personal objections to Dart; he disliked his haughty bearing, his plausibility of manner, his restless, dictatorial spirit. There was a natural antagonism between the two that was irreconcilable. Had he been William's own father they could not have lived together peaceably under the same roof. Neither of them would have submitted to the will of the other. As it was, the two civilizations represented by each unfitted them for any mutuality of sentiment. Both were aris-

tocratic in tone ; the one from the exclusiveness of culture, the other from that of association.

With the doctor, labor in all its forms was honorable, making the only solid basis of everything that adorns and elevates man. Dart looked upon it as degrading, and constituting the chief barrier between the gentleman and the vulgar. Both were equally proud, but their pride was made up of different elements. The doctor's was more complex than that of Dart, family pride being a basis of both. The doctor belonged to a race of scholars, and the scholarly affinities in him were at war with the abstractions cherished by a puritan ancestry, which, while he rebelled against them, still struggled for the mastery over him, and failing in their direct object, warped him into a region of doubt and distrust. They did not soften his nature, but imparted to it a sharp edge and a metallic polish which gave an additional hardness to an individuality sufficiently marked in itself.

That which had been a system of religion to his ancestors, in him took new forms; some good, some bad, all different from the original type. His very infidelity had sprung from the intellectual acumen that those ancestors had acquired in fields which he spurned as only productive of tares and brambles. He had never condescended to discuss these matters with any one except Dr. Stanyan, and even his tenets seemed to be little allied to those formerly held by the clergy of New England. Believing that the doctrines taught in the churches illiberally confined the providence of God to only a chosen few, who were, to all outward seeming, no better than others, the doctor turned his mind to the contemplation of the universal brotherhood of man without once dreaming that Christ, whom he discarded, had first proclaimed that brotherhood and had spent His earthly life in exemplifying it.

Though Dr. Carew was not the first man who, standing in front of the bulwarks of puritan theology, has found himself unable to look over them, or through them, and see the principles which they so ingeniously

*hide*, yet he was one of the most earnest and stubborn of those who have tried to do it; and finding his moral vision obstructed in that direction, he turned to the light of nature and tried to read by it the great problems of humanity. Foremost among these was that of individual liberty struggling with the darkness of ages to assert itself. To the contemplation of this theme he brought whatever learning he possessed and the powers of a mind naturally glowing and heated to a tenfold intensity by the fires of opposition. He had from the first been a bitter opponent of the American constitution, which, from its practical recognition of slavery, while it theoretically disclaimed it, he pronounced a lying document, unworthy of a civilized age. He was the first Abolitionist that I ever knew, and the most unrelenting. Slavery was so hateful to him that he never lost an opportunity of denouncing it in terms that were at that time very offensive even to Northern ears. The toleration with which the clergy looked upon this institution heightened his prejudice against them, and whenever he heard a text of Scripture cited in vindication of it, he scoffed at the authority and the application alike. "If this is the religion of your God it is unworthy of the respect of mankind. Brahminism has at least the merit of consistency," he would say. "Caste is its base and its keystone. Yours is a monstrous composite structure of disjointed stones that will tumble upon the heads of its builders." He could see in it nothing typical of "a temple not made with hands."

On the contrary Dart saw nothing beyond the material civilization that rests upon the basis of the ownership of the many by the few. Labor was defiling; the laborer was a slave. As compulsory labor was slavery, so voluntary labor was a mark of a grovelling spirit incompatible with liberty, incapable of estimating it. The irresponsible will that could employ itself only in enjoying and expending the product of another's toil constituted the *free man*, and only such a person could be a *gentleman*. Whoever owned the bodies

of the greatest number of men, he was the highest embodiment of free manhood or gentlemanhood. As a man was born, so ought he to live, running in the same groove from the cradle to the grave. Schools to educate the people only corrupted the lower classes and taught them to usurp the places of their betters.

Entertaining sentiments so opposite to these, it is not strange that Dr. Carew regarded Dart with distrust, and looked upon his pretensions to his daughter's favor with scornful aversion. Besides these inherent prejudices, rumors had reached his ears of some dishonorable conduct on the part of William, which intensified the doctor's resolution to interpose all possible obstacles to his further intercourse with Charlotte.

It was therefore with unspeakable satisfaction that he recalled the interview with his daughter in the morning twilight. He pondered its details while breakfast was in preparation, and congratulated himself on his forbearance and on the unexpected docility of Charlotte, while he shuddered to think what violent extremes might have followed a contumacious refusal to comply with his wishes. "All will be easy to me," said Dr. Carew. This reflection was confirmed by the entrance of Charlotte into the breakfast room. She slipped in before he was aware, and, while he was walking from her, threw her arms about him in her hide-and-seek way, showering her bright hair over her face as he turned to kiss her.

"I will be gentle with *her* and absolute with him," said the doctor to himself with a self-conscious air, as he seated himself at the table.

She seemed so demurely happy, he hardly knew what to make of her. Could it be that she was dissembling? The thought flashed upon his mind to glance from it.

"You are very pale, but very pretty, my dear. I am sorry I robbed you of your morning nap. You can make it up by-and-by. You can forgive me, can't you?"

"No!"

This was said with the most winning simplicity.

"You don't love him better than you do your old father?"

"Yes."

"Seriously, Charlotte? Assure me that you will never leave me"

"Never."

The conversation passed to lighter topics and ended by her putting on her hat and begging to accompany him on a visit to a patient. So they went out together to a neighboring town and talked and chatted merrily till they returned to dinner. Just as they were turning in at the gate Dart passed them unexpectedly and bowed to them. The doctor stiffly returned the salutation, and glancing at his daughter saw that her face was crimson. He looked down and sighed. After dinner he went into the library and wrote the following note:

"MR. DART:

"*Sir*—I take this occasion to inform you that your visits at my house are distasteful to me and I beg you to discontinue them"

He dated and signed the note and sent it off before he lighted his after-dinner pipe. Meanwhile Charlotte sat at the other end of the table reading a German story and tranquilly lost in it. There was never man happier than Dr. Carew.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A TRACTATE ON RADICALISM.

THE mental condition of my grandfather Barker at this time gave his family much uneasiness. The interest that he took in country auctions led him into the wildest extravagances. He watched the advertisements in the newspapers, scrutinized all the handbills on the signposts, employed private agents to get the earliest information of the times and places of holding these sales, and scoured the country far and near to search them

out. He had already exhausted his little stock of ready cash in the purchase of horses, vehicles and useless trumpery. His barn showed like a public stable and his house had the appearance of a general furnishing establishment. Nothing could sate this ravenous appetite to "bid off" every thing that was set up for sale, and whoever ventured to compete with him was regarded almost in the light of a personal enemy. He would be absent from home until a late hour at night, and often stayed away for two days without informing my grandmother where he was. She lived in a state of constant apprehension about him.

One night he returned after twelve o'clock and summoned her out of a sound sleep to get up and prepare supper for him. He brought home a gig rather the worse for wear, two wretched old chaises, a sleigh fit only for firewood, and a pair of lame work-horses that were models of equine anatomy. He was as hungry as famine, and in a most provoking exuberance of animal spirits. He would not eat a mouthful till he had lighted a lantern and exhibited his new treasures to his wife. Then he fell to with a terrible appetite and prolonged the meal with unconscionable details of every thing that had happened to him in his absence.

"My dear Puss, I have had it all my own way this time. Bargains! bargains! I made enough on the horses and gig to pay for the chaises and the sleigh. You shall ride after the horses, my love. They are jewels. They are low conditioned now and want rest, it is true. Give them that, and they'll beat the greys. Why don't you say something? If you don't like them, say so."

"They look very thin," said my grandmother diffidently. "I should think it must cost a good deal to bring them up—but you know best. It was very dark and I was hardly half awake; but really I thought they looked almost like *skeletons*. I suppose I must have been dreaming."

Mr. Barker broke into a roar of laughter.

"I knew you couldn't see them. I didn't get a good



light on them. Skeletons ! You must have seen their shadows on the grass."

"Perhaps I did. Whatever I did see had very long legs. What is the matter with the tail of the taller one ? I thought there was no hair on it."

"He has rubbed it off in the stable, my dear."

"Do you think it will grow again ?"

"Of course it will, only give it time. He cribs a little. I must break him of that. I will sheath his manger with sheet iron."

"How will you keep him from rubbing his tail ?"

"Put his ribs between stanchels so that he can't get his tail against anything."

"And then what is to hinder his rubbing his ribs against the stanchels ?"

"What a child you are, Eunice ! I shall cushion them."

"Did you pay for your purchases ?"

"Yes—I gave my note for them; don't bother me !"

"You had eight horses before. Where shall we keep them all in the winter ?"

"In the stables, of course."

"But there are only six stalls."

"Then I must build a new stable."

"Oh !"

"What makes you yawn so ?"

"I'm sleepy."

"What a pity. I was never more awake in my life. I don't remember that I was ever in such a flow of spirits. I have done a pretty stroke of work since I saw you. I've finished my tractate on Jeffersonianism. It is my *very best* production. I have given democracy the final stab. I had to contend with a difficulty that I am afraid is incurable. I allude to the poverty of the English language. It lacks denunciatory epithets ! There ought to be at least two thousand savage words added to it, to meet the demands of the subject. The old scourges have no sting left in them. They can't even raise a blister on the back of such a wretch as Jefferson. I derived some comfort from the few phrases

in the Prayer Book touching the moral character of Guy Fawkes. But they are too tame. They don't reach the *raw*. I have invented some new ones. Melted lead and pitch are harmless compared with them. Only half a quire of fools-cap, rather closely written through. I wish the reprobate was obliged to read it aloud to me and hear my commentary on it. It's too late to go to bed to-night, and I thought the tractate would fill up the time pleasantly till daylight. Shall I read it?"

"It is such an important treatise," said my grandmother, despairingly. "I want to give my whole mind to it when I hear it. Wouldn't it be better to wait till morning?"

"Nonsense, Eunice, you do yourself injustice. You are a woman of remarkable perceptive powers. You can understand it if you *are* asleep. Besides, it is very clearly written; I tell you it is in my very best style."

"I know it must be excellent, but my head aches."

"It will cure that," replied her husband, walking across the floor in a very excited manner, and slapping the manuscripts down upon the table. "Such a basting as I give him would excite sympathy enough in you to cure headache."

"If I should fall asleep you would be angry."

"Not a bit," said Mr. Barker, passing his fingers through his hair. "I shall only nudge you if you nod. Let me," he added, in his most coaxing tones, smoothing down the crumpled pages and looking blandly at her, "let me give you a few of the most exasperating passages, just as a sample, you know, to see how you like it. Sleep, indeed! It would wake the dead."

She saw that resistance was hopeless, for the light in his blue eye was coming to a sharp focus. It would flash out in a minute. It would not do to cross him in these moods.

"Oh, yes," she said, with a show of deep interest. "Give me a specimen."

"Shall I begin at the beginning?"

"Yes, John."

He cleared his throat and began. Nearly dead with fatigue as she was, she feigned a wakefulness that would have appeased the vanity of Alexander Pope (whom my grandfather hated as he did the devil), and applauded in the right places—for, as he said, she was a discriminating woman until the author forgot in his enthusiasm all about his audistress, and went on, page after page, discharging his federal arrows at the head of the offending patriot for a good half hour without looking up. Suddenly, in the midst of a frightful denunciation, he came to a dead halt. Mrs. Barker was fast asleep. The ominous silence roused her. She rubbed her eyes, stared at the light, and smiled. As she had predicted, her husband was angry.

"If it had been any other part of it, Eunice; but *this* period. I vow it is enough to provoke a saint."

"I'm very sorry. I told you how it would be. I really couldn't help it. You don't make allowance enough for the weakness of my head, dear. It would puzzle General Hamilton himself to understand that passage if he were tired. You forget that I am a woman."

Mr. Barker took a bit of his wife's faded cheek in a droll way between two of his knuckles, and pinched it.

"Well, Eunice, I dare say you are right. It's very logical, and you look worn. Some other time will do. It's two o'clock. Let's go to bed. I'm surprised that you are sleepy though. Look at me! I could stare the sun out of countenance. Never mind—I ought to get a wink of sleep myself, for I must attend a vendue to-morrow. Is the fire well raked up? I expect to be burnt out some of these nights."

"It's all right," said my grandmother.

"Well, come along then. I'm dreadfully afraid of fire, I don't mind water—but fire! Come."

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE VENDUE.

THE next morning while we were seated at the breakfast table, a gentle tap was heard at the door.

"It is your grandmother," said my mother to me in a whisper. "She always knocks when you are at home," she added, addressing my father.

"She need not be so ceremonious with me."

He arose and went to the door. The old lady came faltering in and sat down upon a settle near the window. I had never taken a sense before of the weight of years that rested on her. Her figure was so slight, and her motions were usually so sprightly, that she had always produced the effect upon me of a person in middle life; but this morning I was shocked at her appearance. She looked worn, and traces of care were on her cheeks. She had been weeping, and it was too evident that she had not slept. My mother went up to her and took her hand.

"Has father come back yet?" she inquired.

"Yes."

"Has anything happened to him?"

"Nothing."

"What is the state of his mind?"

"Much the same as it was, only more flighty. I really don't know what is to become of us."

She was so overcome by her emotions that she burst into a fit of sobbing. It was some time before she could recover herself. When she did she recounted the things of the previous evening.

"If he could only content himself with spending his money at home, I could make up my mind to bear it. But this dreadful publicity. Oh, the mortification of it! Sometimes I think I can never look anybody in the face again. I feel as if I had stolen something and must hide somewhere. I hope my shame is not getting stronger than my love; but before that happens I

shall die, I suppose. I don't care on my own account; only on his."

"Don't talk in that way," said my father. "You are not to blame. Yet I sometimes wish you could be a little sterner with him."

My grandmother shook her head and said :

"I have lived with him more than forty years and I ought to know him by this time."

"But why do you let him drive you into a nightmare with his driveling compositions?"

"They are not driveling, they are pithy and good," replied my grandmother bridling up.

"I could not stand it," said my father with more frankness than tact.

"You are not his wife, James," said the old lady.

He made no answer. He felt that he had wounded her sensibilities and he was very fond of my grandmother. She sat a few minutes pulling the strings of her bonnet in a nervous manner. At last she went on:

"He has spent all his money and is now giving his notes. You know the farm is in my name. If he asks me to mortgage it, what shall I say, James?"

"Say no!"

"I'm too old to begin; I'd rather be turned into the street."

"Don't go on in that way," said my father. "As long as I have a roof to cover me, you will have one."

"Thank you, James. He is going to another auction this afternoon, and he is coming here before he starts to borrow money of you. I came to ask you not to lend him any."

"Not a dollar," said my father.

"And to beg you to reason with him," added the old lady.

"Reason is thrown away on him. I don't think he can help it," said my mother. "Poor dear soul; I will try what I can do. I'll shame him out of it. James, I want to borrow some money. Can you let me have two hundred dollars?"

"What do you want to do with it, Mary?"

"Go to the auction and bid against him."

"What do you think of that, mother?" asked my father, laughing, as he thought of the figure his demure little wife would cut at such a place.

"It will only make him worse; besides, daughter, how could you think of doing anything so immodest?"

"I don't care for that. I'd dress up in my husband's clothes and go, if I didn't think petticoats would make him feel all the more ashamed," answered my mother.

"You don't mean it—you are not in earnest, Mary?" asked my father.

"Yes, I do mean it. I will try. He will submit to interference from me sooner than from any other person. I ought not to be unfilial enough to do it, but I have no right to shrink from it. He has done so much for me. You know when."

"The more I think of it," said my father, "the better I like the plan. What do you say, mother?"

"He's dreadfully proud," she began, "and—"

"That's the sharp point of the argument," interposed my mother.

"Can't endure ridicule," pursued the old lady, "and will break out into a fit of anger. He will say something dreadful before everybody."

"I don't care if he slaps me in the face. Do consent, mother?"

My grandmother put in a long remonstrance, but the more she protracted it the feebler it seemed to grow, and at last she stopped in the middle of a sentence with the exclamation:

"If it could do any good—if—" and sat looking at my father as if she wanted him to decide the matter.

"Let Mary try it," he answered, in a decided tone.

"Do what you like. We must do something, and I'll take my chance of the consequences."

With this hesitating assent she took her leave. I watched her walking through the meadows with a heavy heart. She is going across the fields to avoid meeting grandfather, I said to myself.

She was scarcely out of sight when Mr. Barker's phaeton, drawn by the greys, came up the road at a swift rate. It stopped in front of the house, and my grandfather alighted. He was very smartly dressed in a suit of black, with a broad-brimmed beaver hat and a white necktie. He had a pair of buckskin gloves, one on his right hand, and was flourishing the other in his left with great emphasis. The horses were so restless that he had got down with difficulty, and as he reached the gate they reared and plunged and cramped the vehicle so that he turned and spoke to the driver.

"Don't hold them in so, Peter. You'll have them back home again at that rate."

With this admonition he walked briskly up to the door and came in without knocking, pulling off his hat as he did so and bowing in a bland manner to our little family circle, who, with the exception of my mother, received him with a politeness more frigid than filial.

"I didn't disturb your family devotions did I, Everett?" said he, shaking hands with my father.

"We had them before breakfast," said the son-in-law in a tone that sounded like an amen.

The answer brought Mr. Barker's exuberance down to zero. He walked up to my mother, who offered him her cheek to kiss. He stooped and put his lips to it, while he extended his right hand with the glove on it for me to shake.

"Sit down," said my father, offering a chair.

"Can't stop for that. I want to speak to you a moment in private, Everett."

"Come this way," said my father, opening the parlor door.

My grandfather followed, pulling the door to after him but leaving it ajar.

It was a peculiarity of the old gentleman that when he had a secret communication to make to any one he always spoke in a louder tone than he did when he was talking to a promiscuous company.

"Stand still," said my mother, "and you will hear every word he says."

Sure enough we did.

"Everett," said Mr. Barker in a stentorian voice, "I want to borrow some money. Have you three hundred dollars about you that you can lend me for two or three days?"

"I have that amount by me, but I can't lend it to you."

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid you'll make a bad use of it."

"No; I'll double it in twenty-four hours. I know where I can do it."

"How?"

"By bidding off cows at a vendue—a lot of twenty cows. I can buy them at half price."

Through the open space in the doorway I heard my father heave a long sigh. I knew what was coming.

"Mr. Barker," said he, in a suppressed way as if he were smothering his words in his mouth, "I want to have a serious talk with you, as I think it's my duty to do it; will you take it kindly?"

"Yes, but don't look so like a tombstone; and don't speak so like a muffled drum at a military funeral. Put your voice up an octave. It sounds so like bad news. I feel as if I shouldn't live till night. Now go on; I'll hear you. I wish you'd be counting out the money while you are talking. It would save so much time, you see. I like your frankness; you don't deny that you have the cash by you. That's one good thing."

"Mr. Barker, I don't feel like jesting."

"I'm sorry for that; it's indigestion. You eat just before going to bed. It's bad for you. I *know* it, for I've *tried* it. Go on with your lecture."

"Mr. Barker, you're giving us all a great deal of trouble."

"You needn't take it, if you don't want it. You make a deal too much of me."

"You are wasting your substance, sir, and laying up sorrow for yourself. Don't you mind how it was two years ago when you had the sale at your house and



took an account of the trumpery you had bought at auctions? Didn't you tell me then that you were too poor to hire a man to fetch your winter's wood?"

"I did have bad luck that time. I had a crazy turn then," said my grandfather, with great simplicity, "but I know what I'm about now."

"You're having a worse time now than ever you had before in your life. The farm will go next. I can see no help for it."

"I can't get hold of that, you know; it's my wife's. How can you talk in such a childish way, Everett?"

"But you'll coax it out of her. I'm sure of it."

"As a last resort, perhaps I shall try that, but if it should come to that, you wouldn't stand by and see it sold, would you, Everett?"

My father laughed outright at the audacious reliance of this reckless man upon the help of his friends. He seemed to be thoroughly convinced of the folly of expecting anything reasonable from such a source; for he said after a moment's hesitation:

"Let me make a proposition to you, Mr. Barker. I'll let you have three hundred dollars, or even five, if you'll promise me to sell off all the old horses and wagons that you now have on hand, and not attend another auction in a year. What do you say to that?"

"Have a vendue at my house and sell them off?"

"Yes; will you do it?"

"It would be very exciting," said the old man, musingly. "I don't mind consenting to that if you withdraw the other condition. By having *one* of my own I forego the pleasure of attending perhaps *twenty* others. Throw in this one to-day, and I'll close with you—that's fair."

"I will not vary the terms," said my father sternly.

"Then *we can't* bargain," replied Mr. Barker. "I could never bargain with you. Good morning."

Badly as my mother felt, her sense of the ludicrous got the better of her, and when the old gentleman came out of the parlor, she said pleasantly:

"Father, the evenings are getting longer now. Why

can't you stay at home, and we'll begin the comedies again. Nobody can read them like you. Don't attend the auction; we will go down this evening, and you shall read 'The Comedy of Errors.' What do you say?"

This allusion to his favorite author put him in good humor in a moment.

"You are a sly one, Mary. You're making fun of me. You think I don't know which Antipholus I am, don't you? I'll tell you: I'm *both*. I've half a mind to close with your terms. I like them better than Everett's. If Everett will promise to hear me read 'The Merchant of Venice?'"

"I'll have nothing to do with such profanities," said the son-in-law.

"But, father," resumed my mother, "I want to ask your advice. Do you think Viola in 'Twelfth Night' behaved like a modest woman in dressing herself up like a boy and going of errands for the duke?"

"Why ye—es. Circumstances compelled her to do it," replied the old gentleman philosophically.

"And do you think Portia was justified in appearing as a lawyer in court?"

"To be sure; she did it to save the life of her husband's friend. Besides, she was a married woman."

"Would you scold if I were to do it from such a motive?"

"On the contrary, I would commend you for it. Good morning."

When the phaeton was driven off my father said: "Now, Mary, get ready as soon as you can. I'll have the chaise at the door in ten minutes. Frank will go with you. Here's the money. If you want more, borrow it of Mr. Holbrook. It is a six miles' drive, and the auction doesn't begin till ten o'clock. You can be there at nine. Don't be outdone by him."

"I will show him that I'm his daughter," said my mother.

We were soon on the road, and arrived at the vendue stand before a single article had been cried. A New England country auction was not in those days a very

select affair. A rude platform had been erected in front of a store, around which, in confused array, were ranged carriages and chaises, gigs, old wagons and wheel-barrows, all of them the worse for wear, and most of them ruinous. To the wheels of the larger vehicles were tied horses, cows and sheep in most admirable disorder. In the spaces between the vehicles and the live stock were groups of farmers and laborers, with a sprinkle of top-boots and cocked hats here and there forming the centres of little knots of weather-beaten faces looking up to the "squire" or the parson, to get the news from trustworthy sources. In the middle of a large circle stood Mr. Barker, lavishing the treasures of his wit upon an eager crowd, and regaling them with side-splitting anecdotes. Around the outer semi-circle were booths for vendors of oysters and other refectations to restore the wasted energies of the inner man. The cattle lowed, the horses neighed, the sheep bleated, and the talk and laughter of the company was varied with the everlasting "Walk up—walk up, gentlemen," of the oyster vendors and piemen. I turned our modest chaise with its back to the crowd so that we could look through its one pane of glass and see without being seen. The auctioneer was not long in mounting his platform. I could not suppress my astonishment at sight of him. It was Oliver Bramble. As soon as he appeared he was welcomed with a shout, as if all the farmers were hawing and geeing at all the oxen in one chorus. There was a universal rush for the stand, where I soon discovered my grandfather with a yellow silk handkerchief over his white head, facing the auctioneer, ready to make his first bid as soon as he saw anything offered worthy of his attention. I thought at the time that I had never seen such a handsome old man, and my mother was also struck with his appearance for she whispered to me:

"There's nobody here looks like him, let him do what he will."

Several articles of small value were knocked down be-

fore Mr. Barker opened his lips. At last the auctioneer stepped forward to the extreme verge of his pedestal in front of the company and called out:

"Make way thar. Lead him up, Tom. Nobody that hain't got no toes needn't git eout o' th' way. Wide awake thar! Make room for Mr. Barker. Here's a bewty for ye! Thar ain't no critter a-goin' (that is, I mean relyin' merely on legs,) ez ken beat his time. Lightnin's slower'n wet peowder compared tew him. And ez for them as soars in th' air," continued the crier, warming with his theme, "they'd swop wing for them all-fours of his'n and give boot! There, that's nigh 'nough. Hold up. Mr. Barker ken see him jest ez well before his head's swallered by him as arter. Come, Mr. Barker, give us the first bid!"

"He's knock-kneed," said my grandfather.

"Heow cud he help it?" replied Oliver, winking at the crowd; "a hoss of his weight, poundin' rollin' stun ez he does deown these ere hills of owrn at th' rate mebbby of fifteen mile an hour? Ef them huffs hadn't ben made of lignumvity there'd a ben more stun on th' Pitch-road than ye'll find to-day, I guess."

"That left eye doesn't wink," said Mr. Barker, shaking his handkerchief at it.

"That's kos he's trew blew, an' ain't a-feared of nothin'," said the auctioneer. "It'll take suthin' more'n that ter get a recognition eout on him. Put yer finger in his eye, Mr. Barker, and ye'll see he'll wink fast 'nough."

"His hind leg is terribly swollen. What is the matter with it?"

"It grew eout of a 'riginal way he hez of spendin' his spare time," said Oliver. "He can't satisfy hisself a usin' of his legs in th' day time; so he puts 'em threw th' stable floor o' nights fer exercise."

"But what makes him blow so?"

"It's partly kos his heart is a-palpitatin' with anxiety, thinkin' he'll disgrace hisself by fetchin' a mean price, rememberin' ez he's ben sold a dozen times for tew hundred dollars; an' partly kos he's been druv

twenty mile this mornin' already and left ter stan' in th' draft," said Oliver. "Them's some o' his principal pints. Pedigree unexceptionable, runnin' back in a unbroke'n line ter the days of Adam and Eve. Give us a bid. We can't dwell on him. Job's old war-hoss cudn't hold a candle ter him in the way of smellin' a battle. Ef Pharaoh 'd a hed him hitched up ter his waggin he'd a cleared th' Red Sea at tew jumps an' lighted in th' middle of Moses' camp, an' then Pharaoh 'd ha' gone hum, took a bath in th' Nile, fed his crockerdiles an' snakes, took his nap an' spent th' arternoon in quarryin' stun fer a pyramid. I say we can't dwell on him. Give us a bid!"

"Five dollars," said Mr. Barker.

"An' a half—six, an' a half—seven, an' a half," echoed Oliver running up the score in response to the bidders.

"Now is my time," said my mother, "Take me down, Frank."

She pulled the veil over her face and I helped her out. As we walked up to the platform, there stood my grandfather in the very heart of the confusion, with his back toward us, his hair streaming in the wind, flourishing his handkerchief in his hand, and overtopping the bids with another half dollar and then another, expecting every moment to win the prize, which kept eluding his grasp. We came up to the stand just as he had made the bid an even twenty dollars.

"Twenty-five," said my mother, in a musical treble that pierced the outer circle of the crowd. Every voice was instantly hushed and every eye turned upon her. I could feel her heart throbbing against my side, but she looked as intrepid as an Amazon. My grandfather turned round and stared at the concealed face with bewildered wonder. He could not make out who the lady was, and as I stood behind her in the crowd he did not notice me.

"Good," shouted Oliver. "Thank ye, mum. I—I see yer know th' valler of th' article. None of yer higglen' half dollar bids. Gentlemen, ef yew want

ter go ter yer graves a-blushin' at yer own shame you've got a chance ter dew it. Twenty-five, twenty-five, I'm offered. Who says twenty-six?"

There was another long pause. Mr. Barker looked around with a comical expression of perplexity at the lady and then at the auctioneer.

"Twenty-six," said he with great solemnity.

"Thirty," said the treble voice without a quaver in its tone. The excitement, now at fever heat, broke out into an unrestrained hurrah.

"Who the devil is it?" asked a man who stood a little behind me, speaking to his next neighbor and smothering his voice with his hand.

"Don't you know?" was the answer. "It's his own darter. The one that tried to make way with herself. I see her with her veil off in the shay."

"Astonishin'!" said the other, scarcely above his breath.

"Madam," said Mr. Barker gallantly, with a polite bow and one of his blandest smiles, "I beg your pardon, I can't bid against a lady. Take the horse if you want him. I forgot myself; vendues are so very exciting! I wish I could recall my last bid, but I can't. Pray excuse me."

"Goin'—goin'—gone at thirty dollers ter—ah! ah! What may I call yer name, mum, ef yer please?" said the embarrassed crier.

She handed him the money without answering his question.

"Fetch up the ceows!" shouted Bramble. "Where th' devil air ye, Tom? Ef yew'd be ez late ter dinner ez ye air every time I call on ye ter help airn one, I'd give ye your vittles fer nothin' th' balance of yer life, Tom!"

Up came Tom at last, leading by a rope in each hand two of the leanest cows that I ever beheld. One of them had lost a horn, and the other had been hipped by an accident, I suppose, when she was a calf. It seemed to me that I could hear their bones rattle as they came up. They were both farrow.

"Dairymen, give yer 'tention," shouted Oliver, in his most enthusiastic manner. "Them tew milkers has got ter be sold ef they don't fetch fifty dollers a head. I'm a-gittin desp'rate, an' I shan't give nobody but the fust bidder time ter shet his terbaccor box afore I knock 'em deown."

"I should think they'd fall down without knocking," said Mr. Barker. "Do you wish to bid, madam? I really would not recommend it. They are perfect scare-crows."

The lady shook her head.

"Scare-crows," cried the auctioneer, in a tone of what our professor in elocution used to call exulting indignation; "scare-crows! They're beef, sir—beef—good enough fer Thomas Jefferson his-self," shouted Oliver, with a wink.

"That they are!" said Mr. Barker, "and a plaguey deal too good for him. I wish he was obliged to cat them, hide, horns and all, with a dish of his own Jacobinism for gravy, and some of his own damned lies against General Washington for pepper and salt, (begging your pardon, madam), and to be his whole lifetime digesting his dinner in a Virginia penitentiary—that's what I wish."

"He'd live forever on 'em," said Oliver.

"It's the only chance he'll ever have for immortality," said my grandfather, very red in the face. "'See Cromwell damned to everlasting fame.' I detest Alexander Pope, but he wrote *one* good line."

"Ef he meant me," said Mr. Oliver Cromwell Bramble, "it's more'n I ask fer. Neow, Mr. Barker; ye owe me a bid."

"Five dollars a head," said my grandfather laughing.

The farmers now fell to, and carried up the bid a quarter of a dollar at a time till it reached nine dollars and a half a head.

"Ten," said Mr. Barker.

"Twenty," cried my mother.

Mr. Barker started as if a hornet had stung him.

"Madam," said he, "excuse me, but you are throw-

ing away your money. You ought not to make such high flights."

"It's so *exciting*, I can't help it," said she in her natural voice.

My grandfather walked up to her, lifted the veil from her face, and looked at her with an expression partly crest-fallen and partly sorrowful that I shall never forget.

"Mary!"

"Oh, no! it's Portia," said she breaking out into a laugh.

"I'll go home, if *you* will," said he.

"Very well, sir. I'm ready."

"Peter, fetch round the phaeton. I'm sorry to leave you, gentlemen, but I am called home by a pressing emergency. Good day."

He bowed and drove off. We followed in the chaise.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE REVIVAL.

THE example set by Mr. Whitefield in New England before the Revolutionary war, had created a host of imitators. These persons were called revival preachers, and they peregrinated the whole country, officiating wherever they could obtain admission into the churches. This was not always an easy thing to do, for the ministers who had churches in their charge did not always choose to invite these innovators, who were exacting, and when once admitted usually insisted on taking every thing into their own hands. This class of itinerants was of a composite order. Some members of it were faithful, earnest zealots who believed what they taught; others were flighty men with little balance of character, and others still were adventurers who had been in disrepute at home, and had taken up the business as a mode of earning a livelihood. Most of them were enthusiasts who wanted to have the



world move at a faster pace than it did. Some did good, others harm; all caused a commotion wherever they went.

We had never had a revival in our church. Dr. Stanyan had steadily opposed it. He said that the Christian life was like a tree that sprang up quietly and fed on the dew and sunlight of revelation, and assimilated them to itself until it had attained strength to buffet with the temptations of the world. The Church he compared to a forest where the principle of association afforded protection to the younger members and security to all, but left to every one its own individual growth. He thought no feverish development, no fierce extremes could add anything to the permanent strength and stature of the Christian, and that a season of excitement would be followed by one of apathy; that our daily bread was what Christ recommended us to pray for, and this would be found in the end to be our best nourishment; that terrible shocks would come, to be sure, and were necessary in the economy of God, but that He provides them fast enough without our intervention. Sickness, disappointment and death are, he said, always ready at hand, to do their work upon us, and teach us by the removal of the foundations on which we have stood to plant our feet upon firmer ones. With this reasoning he had availed hitherto to keep these itinerants out of our limits, notwithstanding the solicitations of some of the church members. This was one of the arguments used against him by Deacon Trowbridge, and it had its weight with a few honest, zealous persons who were ignorant of the motives of the man who urged it.

Instigated by Deacon Trowbridge the more despairing Christians in the community became clamorous at last on this subject. Their importunities might have been resisted still longer, but for the arrival in our University town, the only one we had then in our State, of a perambulating preacher who made revivals a specialty. In this central position he was very successful, and from it his light radiated to our utmost limits. He

was invited to visit different towns and rouse the lukewarm churches to a sense of their responsibility. Wherever he went he set the little communities on fire with excitement. In the village that bounded us on the west he had already held a protracted meeting four days in length and had set the people wild.

This bewildering man had come, so it was said, from North Carolina, armed with letters of introduction from well known persons to their friends here. The coming of the Rev. Porter Green was as remarkable and better authenticated than that of a comet. He brought a letter to William Dart, which he mailed from the post office adjacent to his field of labor, proposing in an accompanying epistle of his own to come over to our village and put us in the right path. As Dart was aware of Dr. Stanyan's sentiments upon this subject, he knew that such an attempt would be futile in that quarter, and handed the proposal over to Deacon Trowbridge, with attestations of the elevated character of the applicant, founded, as he said, upon a long personal acquaintance. Kindling with the prospect of gratifying a long repressed wish, the deacon flew from house to house to circulate the news. No more favorable time could have been selected for inaugurating such an enterprise. The irrepressible rains of the season had nearly destroyed the hay crop, and damaged the harvest; and the yield of potatoes and Indian corn was likely to be small. This had thrown the farmers into a fit of despondency. Typhus had visited our community and laid a heavy hand upon it. The mourners went about the streets casting melancholy shadows in the sun, and recognizing each other without a smile upon their faces, as if ghost were meeting ghost. Some had Continental money in their chests which they despaired of ever seeing redeemed, and others with gnashing teeth had committed theirs to the flames.

The federals were disturbed at the growth of democracy, and dreamed nightly of the enemy sowing tares in their fields. The old haze of epidemic super-

stition that the lightnings of the late war had dispelled for a while, began to settle down again upon the horizon. A new war with England was also springing into existence, casting foreboding apprehension far and wide. The old ministrations, dropping gently from the pulpit, were too scanty to slake the burning fever of the hour. Storms and whirlwinds and such like convulsive demonstrations could alone answer to the cravings of the popular mind. The grain of mustard seed could produce nothing that was able to cast a shadow wide enough to hide the universal gloom.

The intelligence of this unexpected event opened new avenues of relief. We are spiritually dead, we must have a revival, was the cry of many a heavy heart. Deacon Trowbridge had an easy time of it with the saints, and even the sinners were ready to welcome anything for a change. In the absence of all social excitements they fled to this with open arms. But what does Dr. Stanyan say? The old loyalty to the minister had been inherited and could not easily be shaken off. Here was a check. The deacon was obliged to put his pride in his pocket and, for the sake of appearance, consult the pastor. Still he need not do it personally. So he asked my father to do it. The interview took place in the counting room of Deacon Trowbridge's store. After a brief statement of facts he first asked my father's own opinion.

"What do you think of it, Brother Everett?"

"I am not prepared to answer yet. It is new to me. Good and evil will come of it; I cannot tell which will bear the greater crop. Have you spoken to Dr. Stanyan?"

"No; I have thought that you had better do it. Will you do it?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Now."

So my father left Deacon Trowbridge's store and set out on his mission. He dealt fairly with the matter and left out nothing important to the argument. He

even urged the respectability of Mr. Green, and cited instances of his success in other places.

"I am opposed to the plan," said Dr. Stanyan.

That was enough for my father. Besides, it chimed in with his own sentiments.

"When I say I am opposed to it," said Dr. Stanyan, enlarging, "I am aware that I cannot help its being carried out. The majority of the church will invite this man here. I cannot publicly resist it. Let it be voted on. I will not attend the meeting and will abide by the result."

The meeting was called, the proposition adopted by a vote of two to one, and Deacon Trowbridge was instructed to write to the Rev. Porter Green, and inform him that the church had closed with his offer. He lost no time in doing so, and it was readily arranged that the missionary should stop at the deacon's house.

Dr. Stanyan behaved very sweetly about it, gave out the notice for the four days' meeting from the pulpit, and took occasion to invite everybody who attended to do so in a Christian spirit, and with an eye single to the glory of God. He said he could have wished that they had come to a different result, but that he should be governed by their decision and should participate if desired in the exercises without attempting to direct them.

"But remember," he added, "as of old, God is not in the wind, nor in the cloud, but in the still small voice, speaking, not to the ear, but to the heart. I had hoped that the sorrows of the year would have whispered their warnings to you without the need of a trumpet; but if the heart does not yet know its own bitterness and must be taught by strangers, God's will be done."

The benediction never sounded so sad from his lips as it did that afternoon.

So the Rev. Porter Green came and was duly installed in Deacon Trowbridge's best bed-room. The doors of the great house were thrown wide open, and a crowd of eager visitors thronged to see the "Angel of

the Lord," as his host piously called him. I went among the rest to catch a glimpse of him.

His personal appearance did not impress me at all favorably. He was a stout, fat man, with a very red face, large mouth, thick lips with supercilious corners, eyes that looked like balls of lead dipped in oil, a retreating forehead, a very short neck, and a great stumpy hand that had the feel of a fish when I tried to shake it. His voice was hoarse and rattling, his enunciation vulgar, and his language garnished with a kind of slang that did not appear to me to belong to the South, but rather to some one of the Middle States. But this peculiarity he might have picked up on his way to New England. It certainly did not belong to our part of the country, and as certainly did not appertain to a well-bred man of any place. I could not doubt however that he came from North Carolina, as Dart greeted him with the cordiality of old acquaintanceship, inquired after his own family and Mr. Green's, and monopolized much of the conversation in talking of details with which they both appeared to be familiar. He must have read the Bible a good deal, and had perverted its language into a cant about human life and the fallen state of man that was very offensive to me. I could not decide upon the exact character of his mind, but felt that it was distinctive as far as it went.

I came away piqued and disgusted, and I am sure Dr. Stanyan did, though he was too kind or too discreet to say so.

The day after Mr. Green arrived the campaign opened with a prayer meeting at eight o'clock in the morning. This lasted an hour, and at ten in the forenoon exercises began again and continued two hours. At two in the afternoon there was regular service as on Sundays, and the evening was occupied with a prayer meeting. Sometimes we had as many as six meetings a day. The stores were shut and the post office was only open at mid-day for a few minutes, if anybody was secular enough to think about calling for letters. The clergy and principal men of the neighboring towns

poured in and were quartered on the householders of the village. All business on the farms was suspended, except such as was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of life. The whole population streamed in and clustered around the meeting house. The enthusiasm soon reached a livid heat which was increased a few degrees every day, until the whole mass was in a glow. Sobs, exclamations, cries of despair interrupted the prayers and the sermon. Anxious seats were placed in front of the communion table, and at stated times the preacher called upon sinners who were solicitous for the salvation of their souls to come forward in presence of the congregation and be prayed for. Those who did so had the benefit of the severest appliances of prayer and exhortation. Those who refused were subjected to fearful denunciations and threatened with visitations of Divine wrath, set forth in the most glaring metaphors of prophet and poet that could be found in the Old Testament. The terrors of hell, the lake of fire and brimstone, the hopeless ages of eternity, the writhings of the undying worm, the gnashings of teeth, the wailings of the damned were applied with a remorseless materialism like physical means of torture to flesh and bone and nerve. A pall settled over the face of nature. The sun went down in clouds of blood, the moon was a warning ghost, the very candle-light in the windows of the dwellings shed a weird glamor upon the disconsolate brows and white lips of the pilgrims, solitary or in groups, who walked the streets voiceless in an ecstasy of fear. The obstinacy of the most hardened sinners was melted like wax or charred in the scorching furnace.

The Rev. Porter Green proved himself master of the situation. He prayed, he exhorted, coaxed, drove and fulminated with a zeal and rage that swept everybody before him. My father, adverse as he had been to the coming of the missionary, was entirely overwhelmed by him. Our house was like a vault full of dead bodies. The head of the family was so irritable that nobody durst speak to him on any matter relating to the affairs

of this world. He was an honest man, and his sufferings were very great at my impenitence. He looked upon me at the table with such pity, and sighed so mournfully over the bread and meat, that I felt as if it were sinful to touch them. My mother was so agitated that she was obliged to spend those four dismal days in her own room, and could see no one but me and the doctor. She felt the shadow of her husband's influence the moment he entered the house and it chilled her to the bone. She was like one under electrical influences, or rather like one who is awaiting the tremulous motion of an earthquake, and ready at a moment's warning to rush from the house into the street for safety.

At her solicitation, and to keep peace in the family, I attended the meeting on the afternoon of the fourth day. As soon as I entered Deacon Trowbridge walked up to me, seized me by the hand and insisted on dragging me forward to the anxious seat. I resisted. He expostulated with a sinister earnestness. My father seconded him and pointed out one after another of my old friends, acquaintances and schoolmates, already there. To my astonishment Dart and Oliver Bramble were among the number. I could not help suspecting the former of playing a part, but I felt sure from the agony depicted upon Oliver's face that his conviction of sin was genuine. Even Charlotte Carew sat on one of the benches, the centre of a group of school girls, crying and wringing her hands, while in a pew near the door was her father, looking steadily at his daughter as if the last ligament that had once bound them together had been severed.

When it was found that my stolidity over-matched both him and my father, Deacon Trowbridge left me with a smile on his face such as I hope I shall never see again, as I am sure I could not look for it in this world, or any other that I have any desire to make my permanent abode. I never knew what the word "gloat" meant until I saw that smile. However I felt obliged that afternoon to review my estimate of the Rev. Porter Green.

Whatever else he was, he certainly was a very stirring, popular orator. His text was "The wicked shall be turned into hell," and the fierceness of his declamation made my flesh creep. During the discourse he pointed his stumpy fore-finger at me and addressed me under the appellation of Gallio, till I felt that every drop of blood had left my face, and that if I were to bite my thumb it would break off in my mouth like a lump of salt. Oh, what a relief was that prayer of Dr. Stanyan, that turned the eyes of the congregation from me, and lulled in whispers of hope and peace the agitations of the hour!

He asked for light to dispel the gloom from the darkened understanding; for grace to lift the weight from the heart; for heavenly music to hush the noise and discords of the world; for faith to resist the shock of wind and sea; for the dawning of a star that should never set. He prayed for humility; for a forgiving spirit; for the simplicity of children; for the blessing that goes with the peacemakers; for the everlasting rest in the bosom of the infinite.

When I left the house I was in tears, and to this day when I look back to that eventful week, so fraught with history that its echoes have never died upon our hills, a film gathers over my eye as it seems to rest upon the good man and associates him with the other ill-fated victims of the revival.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE RETREAT.

ACCORDING to her promise to her father, Charlotte had received no visits from Dart down to the close of the protracted meeting; and the two interdicted weeks had nearly expired. She had met her lover often during that time at Deacon Trowbridge's and on the "anxious seat," but if they had any other fellowship it must have been of a very secret



kind, and it is certain that her conduct had been such as to elicit no remark. She and William had been of the very first fruits of the revival, and contrary to the expectations of everybody, had both joined the church. Few persons suspected the purity of their intentions, and the wonder was rife in every quarter that Dr. Carew, who was known to be a skeptic, should take his daughter's conversion so kindly. He even spoke charitably of Dart, and seemed to relent toward him and to regret the course he had taken to exclude him from the house. Dart appeared to bear his banishment with a christian spirit and bowed benignly to the doctor whenever he met him.

I cannot tell why, but I distrusted this radical change, and felt an increasing aversion to the man the more I saw of him. Perhaps this was partly owing to the fact that he often walked with Marcella to and from the meeting-house, and partly that I saw him in such near proximity to Charlotte. My dislike might have been strengthened, too, by finding him so often in Dr. Stanyan's company, as I feared that I was losing the confidence of my old master, while Dart was gaining it.

The doctor's manner toward his daughter was very painful to me. He watched her every moment when he was at home, followed her about the house wherever she went, and appeared to make it his sole business to be with her. He had cast aside the dry raillery that used to disguise his affection for her, and abandoned himself to a tone of supplicating helplessness, as if her favor were the only thing to be sought and her frown the only thing to be shunned. He appeared to exist only by her sufferance. If she left the room while he was engaged in conversation, he immediately dropped the thread of his discourse and seemed to grope for it like one who is trying to make up for the loss of sight by a more refined sense of touch. He had never seen her in a very clear light, and now his solicitude made him almost totally blind. His love magnified her so much that he could discriminate neither dimensions nor distances. Her presence overwhelmed

him and her absence made everything a void. Like a lover whose object of adoration is immeasurably above him, he was all the time at a disadvantage, and gave her opportunities to avail herself of his weakness.

Perhaps the spiritual change that he believed to have come over her heightened the color of the atmosphere that surrounded her; perhaps the fear of losing her gave a twilight halo to her beauty. Whatever might be the cause, he never once hazarded any allusion to the subject of their domestic disturbance, and before he was aware of it both Dart and the Rev. Porter Green, whom he had hated with equal intensity, were frequent visitors at his house, and engaged in discussions that would have once been distasteful to him, but now afforded him apparent satisfaction.

Whether or not Charlotte was sincere in her professions the reader must judge for himself, but I am inclined to think she was. The motives of William and Mr. Green will be inferred from the facts disclosed in the sequel of this history. It is my business to confine myself to an honest narration of events, as my own credibility as a witness might be involved in any inferences that I might draw from them.

Imperceptibly Deacon Trowbridge slipped into the doctor's family circle, and the three visitors soon passed to and fro at will, taking moonlight walks, sometimes with Charlotte and sometimes without her, in such an interchangeable way that nobody could tell what object led them to the house or drew them from it. In the excitement that prevailed public scandal forgot itself for once, and found a charitable motive even for eccentricity.

Deacon Trowbridge was very popular, and had added to his spirituality of expression by a pallor that was very becoming. There was not a blush of Madeira, not a tinge of the fruit of good living (in a physical sense) to be seen in his face. Modesty ought to prevent my imputing any evil designs to him, inasmuch as the reader is already aware of my unfitness to pass judgment upon him.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE WHITE OWL.

ONE evening soon after the close of the protracted meeting I called at Dr. Carew's and found him alone. He received me with kindness, but after placing me in a chair by the window and seating himself beside me, he appeared to be as much lost as if he had been asleep. I tried to rouse him by asking after Charlotte. At the mention of her name he started.

"She is gone out with *them* for a walk," he replied.

"With whom?"

"With Mr. Green and the other two."

I was much shocked at the change in him. Was he losing his mind? Was he seriously impressed by religious considerations? Had he given over the contest with Charlotte, and was he heart-broken at the prospect of a separation? All these questions I asked myself, but could not answer them.

He was in such an impenetrable mood, and seemed to be so sorry for his reserve and so unable to overcome it, that after a few unsatisfactory commonplaces I arose and took my leave of him.

Disturbed in mind and impelled partly by curiosity to see Oliver in his converted state, I took the way home by the lake, and directed my steps to his house.

As I drew near it my attention was arrested by a loud, earnest voice in a high key and very self-sustained and pronounced in its enunciation, such as could hardly be conversational, but was rather in a strain of exhortation. It was strange and yet familiar to me. I stopped and listened. It was Oliver praying. Irresistibly droll as were the associations connected with this frail, fun-loving creature, I yet felt a twinge of self-accusation when I reflected upon my superior advantages and impenetrable hardness of heart. Born under the shadow of puritanism, I inherited its reverence for God, its aptitudes for christian culture its

lively moral sensibilities, its earnest strivings after immortality; but to all the gentle and loving influences of a faith in Christ, such as takes possession of the heart by a holy domination and subjects it to an authority that loves so much that it dares not entertain a rebellious thought, I was an utter stranger.

Here was a man from a lower stratum of society lifted in a moment by some unseen hand to an immeasurable height, which a lifetime of training, and countless prayers breathed from sainted lips, had not enabled me to attain.

Oliver was drawing his devotions to a close when I was first made a witness of them. The door was closed but the window was open, and I could see his face in profile, the crooked outline of his kneeling figure, and his sun-browned hands as he grasped the top of the chair that stood in front of him. The last two sentences were in these words:

"Help us ter be thankful for what religion we've got, no matter heow we got it, and bless this famerly, an' soften th' heart of Sally an' th' gals, an' help Tom ter repent an' turn. 'Bove all, restrain me from drinkin' rum an' winkum an' all other bev'rages ez keeps th' head of th' heouse from providin' vittles fer th' children, an' stockin's and shews agin' th' cold, an' make sinners scurcer an' scurcer, an' saints plentier an' plentier tew th' end of th' world. Amen."

As soon as he had concluded he went to the door and opened it before I had time to announce myself. His face was surrounded with a halo of solemnity, which, as soon as he set eyes on me, burst on a sudden into a full blaze of individuality; for nature had stamped him with such ineffaceable marks that no superinduced expression could make his features proof against surprise.

"There aint no doubt but what it's yew, Mister Frank?"

"Who else could it be, Oliver?"

"Can't say. Thought paradventer it might a ben th' devil. He walks about like a roarin' lion, yer

know. One thing's sartin, ef he does walk thar's an army of saints a watchin' on him. I wus yew was amongst 'em."

"Don't put on a mask, Oliver; it don't become you half as well as your natural face."

"Never more mistaken in yer life. I'm in airnest. Got any light yit?"

"No, and I don't believe you have."

"Think it's a jack o' lantern, don't ye? 'Taint. Thar aint no yeuse in tryin' ter hide th' fact that ef Paul or Pollos had ben clus at hand I'd rather a ben convarted by either on 'em than by Mister Green, who looks ez if he'd seen a consterble afore ever he sot eyes on me; but beggars mustn't be chusers, an' ef there's a cat behind the meal, I can't be held 'countable fer thet, pervided I ain't nothing else *but meal* myself. I ain't a foolin'. Ye'll find that eout. I ain't straight timber—that's trew. There'll allers be a nat'ral crook in th' stick. Grace'll tug at it an' try ter straighten it eout, 'an ez quick ez she takes her hands off it, it'll spring back. Nature's dretful strong in me. Satan puts queer idees in my head an' I can't keep 'em eout, an' some desires that I s'pose air wus 'n pisin. He's a dewin on it neow. I want a drink of winkum this minute, but I wunt take it, dry ez I be. I'll choke fust. He's a weisperin' in my tother ear ter say misbeholden things about some of th' 'lect: Deacon Zalmon among others. But I wunt. Oh, Mister Frank, stop where ye air. It'll be easier fer yew than fer me. Yew're heart's meller neow. Give us yer hand an' come along, I'll give yer a pull, an' we'll kinder stiddy each other. That's th' way ter dew it."

With a passionate jerk he caught hold of my hand and dropped a tear on it, as he dragged me into the house. The man was indeed in earnest. His purpose lighted his eyes, shone in the angles of his shrewd features, glowed in the ruggedness of the vernacular that was the vehicle of his extravagant and whimsical conceptions. It had not leveled the inequalities of his individuality; nothing could do that; but it had shed over

them a moral atmosphere tinted with colors that I felt would not fade out. Much as I distrusted the instrument used, the workmanship bore unmistakable traces of the Divine hand.

The interior of the habitation presented a great contrast to its former neglected appearance. It was scrupulously neat and well ordered, and the family, for the first time, I believe, in their lives, were tidily dressed. Mrs. Bramble and her red-haired daughters were seated on the settle and were all decorated with new shoes and clean white stockings. Tom sat near them displaying nearly a whole side of leather on each foot, which he complacently regarded, at the end of his long outstretched legs, in a safe and distant perspective. Sally rose and welcomed me with a sigh and a smile which were repeated in faint reflections by the three daughters.

Tom alone kept his seat, staring at me with a wondering look as if doubting how I might be affected by the sight of the whole family in full costume.

Here then was a practical demonstration of the fruits of the revival. The enchanter's cup had been broken and the captives liberated by a single blow. The rags had vanished from the windows, that were adorned instead with neat curtains. There was a snowy cloth and open Bible upon the table that stood in one corner of the room; the floor was sanded; the chairs stood ranged against the newly whitewashed walls; the very cat and dog typified the lion and the lamb of scripture and lay down together in one another's arms.

It was an awkward meeting. I felt as if I had invaded a sanctuary, and had broken in upon the performance of rites in which I was too profane to participate; I saw that they were pitying me; I fancied that they were praying for me. The last afternoon of the four days' meeting had not affected me half so deeply. Sally made two or three attempts before she could control her feelings enough to speak. At last she said, pointing to Oliver:

"Who ever wud have thought it, Mister Frank?

Look at that ere book. He's ben a readin' on it an' a prayin'. We've all got a blessin' here that the house can't hold, nor our heads nuther. Everybody sends us suthin' that we doant deserve. To think of his leavin' off drinkin' an' hevin' winder curtains—an' look at them shews; five pair on 'em. Oliver's the very last on us to go barefoot. Oh, the sakes!"

"Hold yer tongue, Sally," cried Oliver; "doant make me eout better'n I be. I've got a pair a makin'; they ain't done yit. But ye see, Mister Frank, I'm detarmined on hevin' shews and stockings. Thet's what I promised Sally. Ef yew'll come reound, says I, I'll quit winkum an' hev ye all shod up, an' we'll lead a new life. I'm afraid I shall be *precoud*. The creakin' of new leather tempts me more'n it does Deacon Zalmon. He's used tew it."

"Leave off yer levity," said his wife.

"I can't help it," said Oliver. "It tingles ter th' end of my toes. Grace is hevin' an' awful tustle with natur in my case. Pharaoh was a pip compared ter me."

Nothing but the conviction that he was speaking from the depths of his heart, and that he was unconscious of anything comical in his manner or mode of expression, kept me from laughing. But I would not have wounded his feelings for the world. The simplicity with which he went on and detailed the folly and wickedness of his life; his unsparing way of dealing with his own shortcomings; his attempts to check the scintillations of fun; his quotations from the Bible, wherein the solemn old English contrasted so strongly with the Yankee commentary and application; his queer explanations to Tom and the children, and his exhortations to me with tears in his eyes to embrace this golden opportunity of repentance; one and all riveted him to my affections and elevated him in my esteem. This interview was the dawn of a real friendship rarely found between persons of such different grades in life; a friendship ripened by subsequent experiences into a love and confidence that lasted

while he lived, and the memory of which is one of the greenest and brightest that enliven the desert of old age.

I soon took leave of the constable and his family, and turned my steps homeward in a track more remote from the lake border than the one that I usually chose, though even this was sufficiently familiar to me. It led over a hill higher than any other in the neighborhood, from the top of which I stopped to look at the lovely expanse of water that quivered beneath the full orb'd moon. How fairy-like it looked, with the shadows of the trees bedimming its shores. How weirdly had this picture always wrought upon my nervous frame—how strangely had it always beckoned me forth, and how faithfully had it rendered back to me the images of my thoughts.

As I stood looking at it a great white bird flew over my head uttering a sad hooting cry that even the cliffs could not reproduce in an echo. Whither goes he upon his night errand of mischief, I asked myself, and why does he haunt me here? Is it true that the owl is a messenger of evil? How should he know better than man of the ill that is impending?

I shuddered, but not now at the sight of the night bird—I shuddered, for I heard a human voice. It seemed to come up from a dell on the north side of the hill where I was standing; where the shade of the pine trees was most impenetrable in its gloom. Whose could it be? What did it portend? I started forward toward the place whence it issued, and crept on in glimmer and dark with a stealthy movement. When I came to the foot of the hill, I stopped and listened. I could hear the voice distinctly, and could distinguish the closing words of what I believed to be a prayer. I had barely time to hide myself in the nook formed by the contact of a pine with a spur of rock, when I heard footsteps approaching.

First a solitary figure of a man stole out of the dell. Then came two others arm in arm, a man and a woman. They advanced from the shadow into a broad shield of moonlight.



The foremost was the Rev. Porter Green. The pair were William Dart and Charlotte Carew.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## A CLASH.

AS I walked up toward the house my father met me at the gate. He had not been in a pleasant vein since the beginning of the four days meeting, and I am obliged to own that I had kept out of his way as much as I could.

"I have been waiting for you to go to Mr. Barker's," he said. "Your mother is there already. It puzzles me to know how you find so much occupation away from home."

I made a little excuse to conciliate him, and then asked :

"What has taken mother away so unexpectedly ?"

"It was not unexpectedly. I have looked for such a call for some days. Mr. Barker is in the dumps again, and thinks he is going to die. He sent for you to watch with him."

"Is he so very poorly, then ?"

"No, nothing ails him but his sinful despondency. It is to be hoped he will not die in such a frame of mind. Come along."

I closed the gate after him, and followed as pacifically as I could, for I saw some sparkles in the corners of his eyes that might break out into flashes on very slight provocation. We tramped along silently in the soft moonlight, he breathing sighs, I looking straight before me and feeling the chills of the moral atmosphere that surrounded us creeping over me. I was glad when we arrived, and yet I dreaded the meeting between my father and grandfather, for I knew they were not fit to come together just then.

As we entered the house Mr. Barker, with his very amplest yellow silk handkerchief upon his head, and his arms folded upon his breast, was walking up and

down the room. He was wrapped in so many folds of contemplation, and looked so impenetrable, that it did not seem as if anything could arouse him. He measured at least three times the length of the parlor floor before he noticed us. Then he just nodded and went on again.

"Be seated, Everett," he said at last, coming to a dead halt in the middle of the room, "and Frank, you may go into the bed-room; your mother and grandmother are there, and I want to say something to your father in private."

I left the room and shut the door. My mother and grandmother were sitting on the bed, and I sat down near them. As I have already said, whenever the old gentleman had a secret to communicate, he always spoke louder than in ordinary conversation. This instance proved no exception to his general habit.

"Everett," he began, in his very highest key, and with a slow and impressive enunciation, so that we could hear every word; "Everett, it is all over with me at last. I'm going to die. It's only my keeping on my legs that prevents the blood rushing into my head this very minute and prostrating me in a fit of apoplexy. Yesterday I had a tumble. I fell from the top of the elm tree into the well. I'm pretty certain to go this time. I don't tell you this to alarm you, for I have no reason to think you would care a ha'penny if I should drop dead this minute. But my little wife would, and Mary would, and perhaps the boy would, though he's plaguey grum and looks confoundedly like you. I don't think the event would kill him. Never mind that. As I was saying, the end is approaching, and my affairs are in a bad way. I'm in debt. I've got twelve horses, sixteen four-wheeled carriages, besides the phaeton, six gigs, (one of them with a broken thill, and another with only one wheel,) twenty-three cows, four yoke of oxen; I cannot tell you how many carts, sleighs and sleds, and lumber and other trumpery enough to fill every inch of house and barn room on the place. With all my live stock, and a flock of two

hundred sheep that I forgot to mention—except two stacks in the great meadow I don't suppose I have seventy-five tons of hay in the world. Winter is coming on. I have sent for you to ask your advice. If I like it, I shall take it. What am I to do? The question is, shall I have a vendue, and sell off this stuff, or dispose of it at private sale? Whichever course I take, you'll have to see after it, for I can't last long, and I shall go suddenly when I go."

The family always considered it lawful to eavesdrop for Mr. Barker's secrets, and my grandmother had taken the precaution to open the door a very little, while he was talking so as to have the benefit more especially of what my father said, for we could hear the other part of the dialogue easily enough.

"Speak out!" resumed my grandfather, after a short pause. "I've got no time to throw away, for *when* I go, I tell you I shall go with a *crash*."

I had a presentiment of a coming catastrophe, and I was not mistaken. I sat where I had a good view of my father, for the candle stood near him on the table. The pupils of his blue eyes were not amiable, and the whites of them were lurid with suppressed fire.

"Mr. Barker," he said, with an articulation as sharp as a file, "if you are near your end, and you say you are, I advise you to dismiss these gimcracks from your mind, and prepare for eternity."

When my father began speaking, Mr. Barker came to a stand, faced about with his arms still folded, and received the volley with an undismayed glare. Unmistakably every shot took effect. Even the silk handkerchief quivered with astonishment and rage. He drew a long breath, as if he needed all the oxygen in the surrounding atmosphere for fuel to throw on the fire so suddenly kindled, unlocked his arms, extended them in the attitude of a soldier fixing bayonet, and then charged home.

"That will do, Everett," he said, advancing a step or two for the purpose of getting momentum; "that will do. If you don't want to give me your advice when I

ask for it, I'll give you mine whether you ask for it or not. I'll not say I hate you, for I don't hate anybody. I feel toward you very much as I do toward the devil. I don't want to do you any hurt, but I can't get reconciled to your personal peculiarities. I don't mean that you lie, or swear, or steal, or break, strictly speaking, any of the Ten Commandments. You are Mosaic enough to have brought them down from the mountain. You differ from Moses however in one respect. If you had been to hand down the Twelve Tables, they would have been engraven on brass, not on stone. Brass is the only substance that has a surface fit to reflect your religious character. The two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets are nothing but hangman's ropes to you. You see everything by contraries. Heat freezes you, light is dark to you, life is death to you, love is hate. The difference between you and other men is, that they are right side out and you are inside out. You can't exist a moment without poking your morality and religion and feelings, as if they were elbows, into other folks' ribs. If you can't offend the eyes of everybody you meet by holding up a sore thumb at him, and making him feel uncomfortable before he can have time to ask after your health, you are utterly miserable. You are always whining about your own sinful heart in order to get a chance to give a dig at other people's hearts. You see I've a dreadfully distinct conception of what is going on in your mind, because you are all outside. I don't mean to say that you are devoid of feeling; but the plague of you is, Everett, that you think the rest of the world are without feelings. You are a grub in a cocoon. It's the whole universe to you. You forget that there are millions of other grubs similarly situated, just as good as you are and just as likely to come out handsome butterflies, and perhaps some of them brighter colored and bigger ones than you ever will be when you're full-fledged. I know what the cause of it is: it's partly because you are naturally so selfish and partly owing to your conceit that has coddled you into think-

ing that you are a saint and that everybody else is under condemnation of everlasting death. You make a sorry fuss about your religious character, just because it's such a puling cripple and has cost you so much trouble and nursing to keep the breath of life in it. If the brat were healthier you would not make such a pet of it. You talk to me about *gimcracks*? Don't I always hear you talking moonshine gibberish to your dog? He's a likely brute to be sure, and did Mary a good turn. In fact *you* drove her into the water and *he* pulled her out. I respect him for it. I'll give the devil his due. But I suppose he has the soul of a beast that goeth downward. I don't think he's an immortal being. Now if you spent one quarter of the time petting Mary that you waste in fooling with the dog, you wouldn't need to keep a dog to pull her out of the water! But it's all Haco, Haco, Haco. So he should and so he shouldn't, so he might and so he mightn't, so he could and so he couldn't! I do believe he thinks by this time that he is an heir of immortality, he hears you talk so much about it and other things that you don't understand a jot better than he does. I'm convinced that he has as correct an idea as you have about the doctrine of election; and as to effectual calling, he can get that by running after you, for you call him all the time. The truth is you're half religion and half dog, and the worst of it is the dog is the better half. Don't let me hear any more about *gimcracks*. In my feeble condition (I shouldn't wonder if I didn't live an hour), I can't stand this aggravating nonsense, and I won't. If you don't choose to help me in settling up my affairs whilst I live, my executor must do it after I'm dead, that's all. I only hope he'll have an easy time of it. I hope the Court of Probate will make some provision outside of my estate to pay him. If I thought I shouldn't drop down dead and disgrace the whole affair, I'd have a vendue and make a swoop of the thing in one afternoon. But it's too risky. A vendue one day and a funeral the next would put the house in such a hubbub, and confuse my little wife so

that she wouldn't lag behind me long, I should expect."

Here my grandfather came to an unexpected period, dropped his chin upon his breast, adjusted the handkerchief so as to conceal the upper portion of his face, clinched his hands behind him and resumed his walk.

My father was perfectly transfixed. The allusion to the dog seemed to wound his sensibilities more than any other part of Mr. Barker's speech. He fairly writhed when it was flashed at him. So did I, too, for I felt the injustice of it, and what a caricature it was; for if there was anything in my father that I loved more than another, it was his uniform tenderness and child-like simplicity in his treatment of dumb animals. He was a perfect fetishist in that respect, and seemed to concentrate his love upon them as a heathen does upon his idol.

This trait was the window through which I used to look at those gentle springs of emotion that jetted up out of his sturdy and otherwise forbidding nature, and which his father-in-law's prejudices or want of sympathy would not allow him to see. Through the rugged crust of doctrines, the crystalization of dogmas, and Hebraism of creeds representing God and man as other than I believe Christ to have held them, I could see an illuminating lamp of Christian charity that did not cast its light so far as it would have done but for the semi-opaque substances that it had to struggle with; but in a narrow path, it had at least the merit of nearness to the eye of him who trusted to it to guide him to Heaven. It shone conspicuously on this occasion. Not another angry or irritating word escaped his lips. What he was thinking of I cannot say; whether of his own frailty or of Mr. Barker's infirmity; but he could not have behaved with more delicacy or propriety.

"I'm afraid I did not consider how ill you are, Mr. Barker," he said kindly. "As to what you say about me I dare say you are right; but don't abuse the dear precious old dog. Come, Haco, tell Mary it's time you were abed."

The dog started up, went into the bed-room and soon led my mother out by the fringe of her shawl, wagging his tail even at Mr. Barker, as if he understood as well as the rest of us that there were good things in him worth loving, badly as he talked, and for all the trouble that he made.

"Poor fellow," said Mr. Barker, patting his ears. "Don't go, Everett. I won't ask your advice any more and I won't give you any more of mine."

"I must go," said my father. "It is late. It is time you were asleep. You will be better in the morning if you only take time to sleep."

"But I can't sleep. Or if I do, it will—never mind. Will you let Frank stay and watch with me, Everett?"

"Yes, of course he shall. Good-night."

"Good-night," said my grandfather. "Take care of Mary, and—and if anything happens don't forget my poor little wife. Don't bother about the trumpery. Perhaps by a strong effort of the will (not Edwards', for his is nothing but a tyrannical necessity,) I might tug through another vendue. We'll see about it. But I can tell you, Everett, the time is plaguey short."

"Good-night," said my father, shutting the door and putting an end to the interview.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FIGHTING FIRE.

THUS left to do battle against that sturdiest of all diabolic impersonations, hypochondria, assisted by the guerrillas known as black vapors, blue devils, and all the other rabble forces that hang about the skirts of an army banded together for the overthrow of the human soul—I began to reflect upon the magnitude of the work in hand. I had no allies except my grandmother, who, not very formidable in her best estate, was worn and footsore with marching and counter-marching, and who, to use the favorite military metaphor of the present day, was terribly demoralized by recent

defeats. At the head of the opposing army was Mr. Barker, the most experienced chieftain of his time in that kind of tactics.

My father and mother had not been gone more than half an hour when Mr. Barker paused in his walk and pointed to the door leading into the bedroom, with a mysterious look.

"Go and see if my little wife is asleep," he said. "I wish to have a talk with you of a strictly private nature. Go softly and don't wake her up," he added, in a tone that would have awakened the sleepest of the Seven Sleepers, had those historical personages been lodgers in the house.

I stole to the bedside on this secret service and reconnoitered. The old lady lay with her face turned toward me, locked in profound forgetfulness. The traces of weariness were too plainly visible in her features.

For the first time in her life, perhaps, even the announcement that her husband was going to reveal a secret that she was on no account to hear, fell lifeless on her ears.

"Shut the door and sit down," said Mr. Barker, as soon as I had returned and reported.

He drew up a chair near me, and to my astonishment actually seated himself after the manner of men who are about to engage in conversation. He was certainly not acting a part, for his countenance wore an expression of earnestness and his voice quavered with emotion.

"Frank," said he, "I have asked you to spend the night with me in place of Everett, because I think you understand me better than he does, and because you are a sensible quiet fellow who can do as he is told, ask no questions, and restrain himself from obtruding his advice where it is not wanted. You mustn't think, my dear boy, that I mean to be hard upon your father. The truth is, I put up with a great deal from him on Mary's account and on yours; besides, I like him when he controls himself. But he is so overbearing and



obstinate with me that I lose my temper sometimes. I try not to, but I do. I have no patience with eccentric people, they are so plaguey unreasonable, and put me out so. Now when a man is at the point of death and is trying to fix his thoughts on his worldly affairs, and, as I may say, is obliged to sit with one eye open to watch paralysis and apoplexy and heart-disease and pleurisy and inflammatory rheumatism, and, in short, dare not take a wink of sleep for fear he shall never wake up, he wants of all things to be let alone. In such a crisis the most sensible person will have some queer thoughts, and he is not in condition to be bothered with whim-whams. I hate eccentricity. I suppose this feeling is inherited. My father hated it, and cautioned me against it, down to the very day that he made that rash attempt—well, never mind that,—for aught I know his hatred of eccentricity may have disgusted him so with life that he tried to make way with himself. At any rate, he was always talking about it and had the keenest eye you ever saw to detect it in anybody that he fell in with. Now with regard to my own situation, of course I know it's very critical. I'm in debt. My little wife has nothing but the farm to depend upon. I've got a mountain of truck on my hands that ought to be sold. Don't ask me why I don't sell it. Don't interrupt me. I'll tell you. Something's the matter with my heart. The *valves leak*. I can hear them sputtering and hissing now—they are liable to give way any minute. Then again," (he went on in a delightfully clear voice,) "my lungs are all gone. They keep me awake nights, they rattle so. Of course you'll admit that a man can't go on long without respiration. I feel a pricking sensation in the top of my head. That's apoplexy. I have a nasty crawling in my spine. That's paralysis."

"But, grandfather," I interposed, "haven't you felt all these symptoms for years and years?"

He got up, took the two ends of the silk handkerchief that fell from his head over his shoulders, one in each hand, and, in this way, resting the weight of his

arms on the diseased member that was ready to burst with apoplexy, began to walk again. I saw by the expression of his face that he was not displeased at the suggestion I had made, and that it had, at least momentarily, diverted the current of his thoughts. After taking a few turns he sat down, caught my hand warmly and said in a confiding way:

"It is true I have had just such troubles all my life, and sometimes they have been more marked than they are now. It may pass off, after all. I have thought, I suppose, a hundred thousand times that I should die within the next hour, and here I am yet alive and seventy years old. I'm glad to see that you have a reflective turn of mind. You are not a jot like Everett. You're a real Barker after all. All the Barkers that I ever knew anything about had *ideas*. And yet the Everetts always sneered at the Barkers. That's owing to the confounded eccentricity of your father's family. Perhaps the poor fellow isn't to blame for it. Come with me."

There was a projection in that corner of the room adjoining the door of his bed chamber, which had been made to partition off the stairs that led into the second story. The wall of the bed-room formed the other side of this screen. In the partition had been inserted a pane of glass, and in the wall a corresponding one, so that my grandfather, as he lay in bed, could look, as he expressed it, "through the stairs" into the parlor, and from that into the kitchen through a third window, in case of fire breaking out in the house in the night.

When in a mood of exaltation, nothing could inspire him with fear. The night and the day, and all the visitations of the elements were alike to him. At such times there was a happy exuberance of feeling about him that accommodated itself to the strangest situations. But when in a depressed frame of mind, he was haunted, especially in the hours of darkness, with an unreasonable and whimsical apprehension that fire would suddenly break out in the house and consume him. There were no lucifer matches in those days,

and we had to keep the seeds of this unruly element in our fire places, buried up in the ashes while we slept, or else resort to the tinder box, which clumsy contrivance was not much in use. I have known Mr. Barker visit our house every morning at four o'clock, for a month at a time, for a fire-brand, rather than keep the enemy in the house over night. But, as he grew older, this task became burdensome, and he at last abandoned it. So he had contrived the loopholes, above described, in such a way that he could look through these three walls, and watch from his pillow the slumbering monster in the kitchen chimney.

When he found it impossible to keep awake any longer, he would rouse up my grandmother to relieve guard, and thus keep the vigil unbroken through the night. She was very gentle and submissive in the discharge of this duty, but her husband was suspicious of her fidelity, and often accused her, I am afraid with some truth, of going to sleep as soon as she ascertained by his regular breathing that she was in no danger of being detected.

On this occasion he had determined that I should act the part of sentinel, and I was very willing to do it to quiet his fears, and lull his overtaxed nerves in a brief repose. I promised faithfully to keep awake, and in going the rounds to stop from time to time, and peep through the little window into the great black mouth of the fireplace that looked vicious enough to swallow up the whole kitchen.

"Keep a sharp eye on it, Frank," said the old man, as we were about to separate. "Of all the drudges in the world, this is the least to be trusted. He's all eye-service. He'll lie and sulk, and smother himself up in the bedclothes, and glare at you through a hole in the counterpane till he sees you napping, and before you can come out of a doze, he'll be sprinkling embers in the closets, live coals in the kindling wood, sticking lighted candles into the flax in the garret, scattering hot ashes over the straw in the potato bin, and before you can rub your eyes and come to your senses, crackle:

goes your wainscoting, and up to the heavens goes your house in a reek of smoke and a crinkle of flame. If I didn't feel sure that I could depend upon your honor, my son, I wouldn't go to bed, for I've a presentiment that a plaguey fire will break out in this house before sunrise."

Again I assured him of my entire devotedness to the cause, and, after some difficulty, I induced him to trust his household goods to my keeping, and retire for the night.

I was determined to live up to the very letter of my contract, and so I walked the room constantly for more than two hours, halting every two or three minutes in front of the little porthole to reconnoitre the enemy.

While engaged in this regular occupation, I had ample time to reflect upon the peculiarities of my grandfather, and to ask myself several questions. Was this mental divergence from the ordinary paths of human consciousness owing to physical disease? If so, could his will overcome the gravitations of nature, and in defiance of them strike out a new course for itself? What was the secret of his unbounded influence over the conduct of others, if he was unable to control his own?

This last question was the only one that I felt sure I could solve. His extraordinary power over men was not properly so much the result of his own will as it was the reactionary effect of the vital force in him that drove other natures this way and that, in a manner that even he could not have prevented. His very enthusiasm was irresistible, and of course involuntary. It kept him awake as it did everybody else, and bewitched them as it did him with its picturesqueness and intensity. His faith in his own plans and ways of doing things was strong as a demoniacal possession, and absorbed that of everybody else, as a whirlpool sets floating substances spinning in it. It was only when Mr. Barker was out of sight and out of reach that you could fetch a long breath, recover from your dizziness, and take some measure of the monstrous inconsistencies of

his behavior. Even then you could not adjust them to any scale of proportions, so as to compare them with the ordinary standards by which we judge of character.

It was not until I felt sure that Mr. Barker was sound asleep that I took down from the shelf the volume of Shakespeare containing the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," seated myself at the table, and began to read that most fascinating love story, which, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, retains its freshness unimpaired and is as perfect a specimen of modern as of antique classical English. With many a vague dream of what might have been, confused interminglings of the two identities of Julia and Silvia with that of Marcella, pausing often and sighing much, I came to the precious lines:

How love doth breed a habit in a man;  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns :  
Here I can sit alone unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses and record my woes.  
O thou, that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless !  
Lest growing ruinous the building fall  
And leave no memory of what it was !  
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia,  
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain !

Here I stopped, and on the wings of suggestion took a flight into realms of enchantment, lingering here and there in bowers of ilex and holly, fanned by the leaves of Italian pines and cooled by the shadows of immortal plane trees. The woods that skirted Milan, belonging no more to any age of man's history, were an island in illimitable space, and I was wandering in them alone.

From this happy isolation I was startled by Mr. Barker crying out in alarm :

"Eunice, Eunice ! didn't I tell you not to go to sleep ? There's a blaze in the parlor. The house is on fire !"

"Ha !" cried my grandmother, "Fire ?—where ?"

"There ! Look at it. It is mounting to the ceiling !"

"How can you frighten me so, Mr. Barker? How can you be so forgetful? Don't you mind that Frank is there watching it?"

"Lord, so he is! I must have lost myself a minute. But how can you be so shiftless, Eunice, as to go to sleep when you know what the danger is? You don't seem to care whether you burn up or not."

"It is only my confidence in my husband," said the old lady sweetly. "You remember that you told me that you should not sleep a wink and that Frank was sitting up with the fire. If I'd had the least idea that you would lose yourself, I'm sure I would have kept awake."

"Frank is nothing but a love-cracked fool," said grandfather.

This is the last I heard of him that night. He did not wake till eight o'clock in the morning.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### TEMPERAMENTS.

I HAVE described the immediate effects of the revival upon me and my father, and the change that it wrought in the family of Oliver Bramble. Its secondary influence on my father was better than the first. After a few days of energetic demonstrativeness, during which he appeared to act upon the belief that he was the central force of the moral universe, and that all other human wills must bow to his and be merged in it, he gradually subsided into a calmer mood, became conciliatory in his manners, considerate of the feelings of the other members of the family, and more companionable and cheerful than I had ever before seen him. He and Haco were constantly together and carried on a perpetual commerce of ideas. It was as much as one's gravity could stand to hear the master elucidate abstruse theological propositions to the dog, and to witness the approving sympathy with which the wise-looking brute assented to the verity of theses that have proved

such a muddle to the gravest philosophers. My father always personated Haco in these intellectual feasts of theirs, putting words into his mouth and making him carry on nearly the whole conversation. He would lay down a postulate and then enlarge upon it or try to answer it, always using the *oratio obliqua* for the canine disputant; beginning with, "Haco says this and Haco objects or denies" so and so, like a mother talking for an infant. The good man had the doctrines of Mr. Edwards, Dr. Bellamy and Dr. Backus at his tongue's end, and could unfold them by the hour at a time; and as there was a swarm of these propositions floating in his head from morning till night, he socialized them by sharing them with his dog, who accepted them with a boundless receptivity very flattering to my father and highly creditable to the discernment of the neophyte.

In this way my mother and I were spared a deal of trouble. While Haco rejoiced in being the target to receive these shots, the eye of the marksman was pre-occupied, and we were safe. That which my grandfather threw out as a taunt, I have sometimes thought might have been a truth, and that Haco had as clear a conception of the constraints that the human will labors under as Mr. Edwards himself. He was certainly as earnest and solemn looking, and at least exemplified the great metaphysician's treatise on the affections to the utmost limit of his ideality; he being the negative and my father the positive pole which completed the electric circle.

My mother, with her keen sense of the ludicrous, often found it difficult to keep from laughing at this and other peculiarities of her husband; but she would never share with me the funny sparkles of inference that danced in her eyes, lest it should lead to a familiarity of handling that might impair my filial reverence for him.

However, it was easy to see that she was as keenly alive to the comical aspect of the images thus presented to her mind as if she had made them a topic of con-

versation. She differed from my grandmother, as a wife, in this respect. Mrs. Barker had as implicit a faith in her husband as Haco had in his master. Except when floating on the wave of some domestic calamity, like that which stranded her at our door on the morning of the great vendue, she was entirely absorbed by Mr. Barker's temperament. Apt and keen as she was in her natural wits, she believed in this strange man with a passiveness that swallowed up her whole being. With her, love had been an unconditional surrender, merging faith and faculties and destiny in a loyalty as illimitable as her aspirations. Mr. Barker was always, in her eye, the one living embodiment of manhood. Whether present or absent, she saw him with the same distinctness. She was a barometer that felt every coming change in his moods, even before he was himself aware of its approach. Her sensibilities were so mobile that they could not be called affinities, but were rather little silken threads, interwoven with the variegated web of his mental and moral organism. She was with him in all the exaltations and depressions of his mind. The pulsation of her heart was the very swing of the pendulum that measured off his existence. This perfect oneness with him had made her life, which would otherwise have been so fluttering and apprehensive, a comparatively happy one. There was nothing that she would not do or suffer on his account, accepting everything as our instincts do physical necessities; clinging to it, and moving with it, without so much as opening her eyes.

She prepared for any anticipated outbreak of his as she did for the changes of the seasons, and no more thought of questioning it when it arrived than she did the coming on of the equinoctial storm or an eclipse of the moon. It was only Mr. Barker—or in other words Providence—in some phase of demonstration all the more interesting for its mysteriousness.

My mother was different. Her heart was quite as emotional, her nature full as confiding, but her mind, when in a healthy state, was more keenly analytical,



and could not help seeing whatever was presented to it in just relations and sharp outlines.

She had more scope of vision, too, than my grandmother. It was unfortunate for her that she had—for this self-operating force reacted on her and often made her unhappy, because she saw so well and so much. She kept contrasting her ideal with the real, and it pained her, and she took refuge from it in a reticent self-communion that even I could not share.

However, as I have said, the revival had a *secondary* effect on my father. He reveled in its exulting Hebraism, the swift chariot and strong horsemen riding down and crushing the rebellious spirit of man—until he became sated with the desolation, and turned for relief to reconciliation and peace. Not in all my recollections of him had he ever been so cheery, so flexible, so conciliating.

We spent hours and hours together, talking about things of common interest to the family. He even read Milton's "Paradise Lost" to us aloud from beginning to end, and blistered the page that recorded the author's blindness with his tears. I believe he embraced in the circle of his pity even the "blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides," though he could not have had a very clear conception of the characteristics of those classical personages. But it was plain that the doctrinal parts of the poem and the delineations of God's wrath most delighted him, and I remember that while he was reading the going forth of the Son in the chariot of the Father to sweep the rebel angels from the plains of Heaven, his eye flashed as if it reflected the glitter of the terrible wheels, and his voice was trenchant as the strokes of the sword that the imagination of the poet so grimly wields.

So much for the operation of the revival in our family.

In the neighborhood and community the effect was various, according to the nature of the subjects acted upon by it. Of course, there came on a great revulsion of feeling among a people made up as we were.

The gloomy farmers and their wives, whose icy temperaments had grown up to manhood and womanhood on their lonely homesteads and had been suddenly wrought into a fierce glow by the blasts of that furnace, like smoking fire-brands thrown into wet grass, only presented a charred and desolate appearance indicative of the fellowship from which they had been so lately sundered. The young men and women, suddenly blown into wild attitudes of excitement, and then left to drop into pools of sullen despondency, with nothing unspent except the instinct of self-preservation that prompted them to crawl to the nearest place of safety, found that refuge too often in haunts of idle resort and in scandals, discords and mutual upbraidings such as were never before known to them. Apathy took the place of enthusiasm, rancor of sympathy, in too many bosoms. Men appeared to walk on tiptoe, and to look about them stealthily as if they had robbed one another of the very light of the sun, and in seeking to hide the stolen treasure had left themselves in darkness.

This was not true of all. A few had been so profoundly wrought upon that no change of time, place or outward condition could ever bring them back to their original stolidity. But most of the people were ripe for convulsion and ready to adopt any plan of attack against any established order of things, if they could only act under the direction of a leader audacious enough to gratify the cravings of their outraged natures.

The Rev. Porter Green had left them for other centres of labor, but not until he had sown tares in the field, which, under the husbandry of Deacon Trowbridge, were soon to spring up and choke the wheat. The deacon went hither and thither seeking out the disaffected of all ages and conditions, and pointing to heresies in doctrine, errors in exhortation, in private teaching, in prayer, in daily walk and conversation. To the ambitious church-members he held out inducements that they should lead and not serve; to the discon-

tented he offered flattering prospects of change ; to the poor rewards. Some he visited at their firesides, others in their fields, others he invited to attend prayer meetings at his own house and to share his hospitality, in order that he might have an opportunity, under the guise of religion and social feeling, to deal more effective blows at the minister, whom he represented as a heartless man, oblivious of the spiritual interests of his people, and leaving the laymen to do the work they paid him for doing. He sought out the hard-headed old people, who moved only in a little circle of recollections, and looked upon innovation as some new mask put on by the devil to tempt the rising generation. He read to them the sermons of Mr. Everett which he had borrowed of my father and which he contrasted with the baneful teachings of Dr. Stanyan, so faithfully preserved in those copious notes taken down by the deacon himself from the lips of the speaker. He lauded the revival in extravagant terms, hinted at his own instrumentality in bringing it about, and spoke in no stinted measure of the spirituality of the Rev. Porter Green, which, he said, in spite of the lukewarmness and duplicity of Dr. Stanyan, had brought forth such abundant fruit.

The result of all this watchful and prayerful labor was that in the course of a few days nearly one-half the members of the church had signed their names to a paper (the real object of which not one in ten understood,) declaring in substance that their minister was a false teacher who held pernicious opinions, who denied the agency of the devil in all human transactions—if he did not even question the actual existence of that malign being—who entertained heretical notions about the character and mission of Christ, who did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, and who led astray the youth under his charge into trackless wastes of heathen mythology leading to Gehenna and Tophet.

As soon as the paper was signed and all other preliminaries were completed, the deacon publicly gave out that he should ride over the next morning to the

county town, retain the professional services of Mr. Dustin Filer, and bring an action in favor of the heirs of Deacon Juba Trowbridge against our ecclesiastical society to recover the parsonage property. The excitement attending this piece of diplomacy, not only among the parties to the suit but throughout the county, will never be fully realized by anybody whose ill-fortune it was to be born and bred in any other part of the world.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MR. DUSTIN FILER.

MR. DUSTIN FILER was sitting in his office reading over a complaint which had been drawn up and signed by a grand-juror against the editor of the *Mercury* (our county newspaper,) for publishing an indecent libel concerning Mr. Abel Hyde, a justice of the peace, who had rendered a judgment, unsatisfactory to the editor, against a brother democrat named Cady, for stealing sheep. The editor, in a gush of republican zeal, had called Mr. Hyde "a crowbar justice," and these offensive words formed the gist of the accusation.

A lawyer's office in those days was of a semi-private character, so that in all country towns nobody thought of entering one without at first obtaining permission.

In the middle of his task Mr. Filer was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Come in," he shouted in a drawling tone; and responsive to the welcome in walked Deacon Trowbridge and his son Zebulon.

"Deacon Trowbridge!" cried Mr. Filer, dropping the paper on the table and rushing up to the august visitor. "I'm glad to see you. I am not often honored with a call from a gentleman of your cloth. Is there anything that I can do for you? Is this your son? I suppose so. Looks just like you. Has a real Trowbridge face. How do you do, young gentleman? Ex-

cuse my left hand. I give the other to your father, you see. I should feel honored by having *two* right hands, one for each of you. Sit down, gentlemen. Well, deacon, what's the news? I never see you without recalling a touching reminiscence of my childhood. When I was ten years old, a little, ragged, bare-footed boy—it was when we lived up there by the ore bed—you came by our house one morning in a chaise and gave me a sixpence for showing you the way to some place in York State. We lived close by the line then, and I knew the ins and outs of that country pretty well for a boy. Don't you remember that now?"

"Yes, Filer. I had forgotten it till you spoke of it. You see I gave away so many sixpences to ragged boys, and one boy looks so much like another, that the fact had escaped me," said the deacon, condescendingly. "But you have done very well since. I always had a sympathy with the lower orders, and I like to see a boy rise in the world. Any plebeian who can *earn* broad-cloth has a right to *wear* it. His grandchildren may be gentlemen, if he can't. It takes three generations to make a gentleman. Among the clergy I have known two to do it. I suppose this comes of the grace of God. I have always been very considerate of the feelings of the laboring classes. What God hath cleansed that call thou not common. You remember the text. I suppose you are thriving now?"

"By the blessing of God, tolerably, I thank you," replied the lawyer with a sanctimonious whine. "I have a good practice. I live in a white house. We have nothing but pot-luck to-day for dinner; I suppose you wouldn't—"

"No, I thank you, Filer."

"Perhaps you are too proud?"

"No, not that. I have come on business."

"What can I do for you?"

The deacon told his story with great particularity. During the recital Mr. Filer's face was a study. He was about fifty years old, with eyes that had small pupils nearly the color of the granite of our country, and

great round whites of the hue of dirty chalk. His forehead was disproportionately large for the size of the man, and of the round or rather bulgy type so common among the laboring classes of New England; his bristly grey hair was close cut, his mouth was a horizontal slit running half way across his face, his lips were long and thin, his cheeks sunken and pale, with the sallow shade that the inordinate use of tobacco imparts to the complexion, his chin broad and short, and his countenance wrinkled and old-looking beyond his years. The whole expression was such as I have seen in misers of an advanced age who began life by being somebody's dog and ended it by being everybody's scourge. Mr. Filer was the very picture of Yankee mediocrity intensified into ready effectiveness by professional discipline, and surface hardened by avarice. His fawning manners, by which he had won his way up from squalor to competence, and the wretched imitation of pious solemnity which he had picked up in his early law practice by aping country squires who were deacons, still clung to him as tightly as his skin. His neck was short, and his head stooped so that it seemed to project like a knob from his narrow shoulders. He had a grotesque way of wringing his hands when excited, and, as his nails were inordinately long, the wonder was how he escaped tearing himself in these spasmodic evolutions.

While listening to the story of his client he would frequently get out of his chair with a great show of muscular force as if about to rush across the room and butt his head against the opposite wall; but all this demonstration of energy only resulted in his lifting one foot very high and setting it down again so softly that it would not have broken an egg—repeating the operation with the other leg, and then, without having advanced an inch, reseating himself and again rubbing his knuckles.

As the deacon's narrative advanced into passages of deeper interest, unfolding the complications of the case, and throwing to the surface its more sparkling

points, Mr. Filer gradually assumed a more self-possessed bearing and an attitude of equality which grew to something like tyranny before the story was ended. When he was fully aware that his client had so far unbosomed himself that retreat was impossible, and that he really needed something more than the ordinary legal advice, Mr. Filer marched his forces boldly to the front and took command of the field with a superiority as unexpected to Deacon Trowbridge as it was irritating.

"Stop a minute, deacon; repeat that last sentence—*ver-y slow-ly*," said the lawyer, with his head resting on his hand.

The deacon gave him just a glimmer of a look of rebuke and complied :

"Very well, deacon," said Mr. Filer approvingly. "Stick to *that gait*. You galloped so fast before that I couldn't keep up with you. We *plodding common people* have such slow wits, you see. We feel the want of being born with a silver spoon in our mouths. Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! *Go on !* I'll try to keep up with you. Let me make another remark here. You see this is a matter of business. You are going for a bag of money, and you want me to help you fetch it. Ain't that about it ? Well, hadn't you better leave out some of your cant ? It chaffs up your statement. I like cant in its place ; I get half my living by it. But I always use it as I do a great-coat. I never wear it except when I go out of doors. The long and the short of it is, you hired Green to go into your church and get up an excitement to drive Stanyan out, didn't you ?"

"Something like that," said Deacon Zalmon.

"Wasn't it *exactly* that ?"

"Well, perhaps it was."

"I thought as much. *Go on.*"

Deacon Trowbridge made a great gulp at this audacity, swallowed it, and completed his story without further interruption. When he had concluded he sat looking at the lawyer, waiting for him to speak, but Mr. Filer observed a dogged silence.

"Well," said the deacon at last, "what do you say to the case?"

"H—m," said Mr. Filer, passing his finger nails through his bristles till they rattled like dry corn-husks, and again contorting his knuckles. "H—m, I say that I know as much about Porter Green as you do ; *perhaps* more. He's a client of mine."

"Do you know anything against him?" asked the deacon.

"N—o. Do you?"

"No."

"I'm glad you don't," replied the lawyer.

"What do you mean?"

"*Nothing*. Don't know anything against him? Very well! You want to know my opinion of your case?"

"Yes."

"It's a devilish tight fit, as my father used to say. He was a tailor, you know."

"I didn't know what he was."

"*Oh*, no, of *course* not. He was a *very common* man. The ninth part of a man, as I was saying. *I* am different. I'm a lawyer, sir. Thanks to our democratic institutions, a *lawyer* and the attorney for the state for this county," said Mr. Filer, slapping his leg. "And you ask my advice. I say again it's a tight fit. H—m. There's no help for it. Either you or Stanyan must go to the *wall*. *Go to the wa—ll*," repeated Mr. Filer in a drawling shout that was terribly emphatic.

"But what am I to do, Filer?"

"Just what you would do if you and Stanyan were afloat at sea and you had a hen-coop to lift your head out of the water and he had nothing but his bare arms. Flop off into the brine, of course, and give *him* the hen-coop."

"That I never would do, Filer. I don't love him well enough for that."

"Then we will suppose that he has the hen-coop, deacon. Pull him off by the leg, wave your hand to him and wish him a good voyage."



"But how shall I do it?"

"Bring an action to recover possession of the property; get all the witnesses you can to substantiate your declaration; buy up his friends, stir up his enemies, use your wits, your tongue, your teeth, your nails. Poison and crush and *tear* him," said Mr. Filer, clutching his fingers into talons and whetting them against one another. He looked so like a beast of prey that Deacon Trowbridge felt his heart warming toward him.

"Filer, you are *my man*," he said, pulling out his pocket-book. "There is a hundred dollars to begin with. Go to work. When you have spent that let me hear from you."

"You hurry me so you confuse me," answered the lawyer, looking greedily at the money. "But no. I can't take it. I have told you how to proceed. I charge nothing for my advice. You will find plenty of poor devils who are itching for money. I don't want money."

Deacon Trowbridge looked at him in bewilderment. He could not believe the evidence of his senses.

"I see how it is," he said at length. "You are growing avaricious. The retainer is too small. I'll double it."

"If you multiplied it by twenty I wouldn't *touch* it," said Mr. Filer.

"I entreat you, Filer."

"It's of no use. I can't afford to serve you."

"Well then, good morning," said the deacon, rising to go. "Come, Zebulon."

He moved toward the door, opened it, motioned his son to go out and was leaving the office, when Mr. Filer rose from his chair and darted after him.

"Stop a minute," he said, motioning with his finger. "Come back. There, Zebulon, shut the door. Sit down."

The rejected client and his son reseated themselves and looked wonderingly at the lawyer and at each other.

"I told you, deacon," said Mr. Filer, "that I couldn't

help you. Now I'll tell you why. I have other fish to fry."

"What, Filer, have you accepted a retainer from Stanyan?"

"No."

"Or from the society?"

"Lord, no. How can you be so jealous?"

"What is it then, Filer?"

"If I tell you, are you sure that I shall never hear of it again, deacon?"

"Yes."

"Will you be responsible for your son? I can trust *you* with my secret for I have *yours*."

"He is perfectly trustworthy, Filer. Go on."

"Very well, here it is. I'm going to put my life into your hands."

"Your life?"

"H—m, yes. Just the same thing—my ambition—my prospects—my future."

"Well?"

"Well, I am a disciple of Thomas Jefferson. I am a rising man. I have amassed a fortune. I'm tired of my profession. Democracy is a new gospel. I am aching to be an apostle. The federal scribes and pharisees scoff at me. They snuff at my name, they say it is vulgar; that it doesn't belong to the old patented stock. We are soon to elect members of Congress. I mean to be the democratic candidate for our district. I want to ally myself with the aristocracy. I can manage the tag-rags and bob-tails, but I can't reach the gentry. *You* can. If you will help put me up, I'll help put Stanyan down. I'll set my time against yours. What do you say?"

Deacon Trowbridge hesitated. He had been waiting for the last four years for a chance to change his political coat, but in throwing that off what would become of the federal cocked hat and knee-buckles? What would become of the queue, the lace, gilt buttons and immemorial odor of sanctity breathed on him by the Levites? He felt that the new order of things would

finally prevail ; but when ? A premature step might be fatal. He sat turning the matter over in his mind till Mr. Filer grew impatient.

"I see we can't deal," said the lawyer. "All right. You keep my secret and I'll keep yours."

"What are your chances of success," asked the deacon.

"I'm *sure* of it," replied Mr. Filer dogmatically.

"Is not the step a precipitate one ?"

"There is a tide in the affairs of men," said Mr. Filer with a nasal drawl ; "a *tide* ! We are on the eve of another war with England. We are agoing to carry the war into the enemy's country—the very country of Hannibal ! The American eagle is agoing to pounce upon the British lion again. She's agoing to make a dig at his *eyes*," cried Mr. Filer, trussing up a piece of the leg of his trousers with his finger nails by way of enlivening the metaphor. "This is what is agoing to lead me on to fortune. I am agoing to ride in on the *impressment of seamen* !—That's the tide."

"And if I promise to help you, you will take up my suit and prosecute it to the end, Filer ? Could we keep it secret ? You know I can't afford to lose *caste*."

"Of course we can keep it secret. I only want one confiding friend among the gentry ; just one of your ears to whisper in, that's all. Give me that and you shall have the parsonage back again, and put your foot on the neck of John Stanyan. What do you say to my proposition ?"

"It's a bargain, Filer."

"Then we are both made men, deacon. Richard is himself again. Give us your hand. *Hard fisted*—you know. Now I'm ready to talk with you. Give us your hand, Zeb, old fellow. I won't scratch you. Sit still a minute."

Mr. Filer walked softly to the door leading into the attic, lifted himself on the tips of his toes, and whispered into the rafters :

"Swift ! Rufus Swift !"

There was a pause of half a minute's duration, and

then there was a thumping noise overhead and on the stairs, and at last with much ado, leaning on a crutch, in hobbled the editor of *The Mercury*, who had already been arrested and was now at large on bail, on the charge of *scandalum magnatum*, for that scurrilous article calling Mr. Hyde a "crowbar justice."

A very quaint apparition was Rufus Swift. He was about five feet four inches high, with a sallow complexion, butternut colored eyes that shone like a snake's, a large mouth with thick lips, teeth with an enamel so white that one might have fancied them to be made of porcelain, if dentistry had ever been thought of in those days, black hair shading a rather high forehead, a broad deep chest and short body that indicated insuperable vitality, and one straight leg and one withered one that he kept out of sight by the dexterity with which he managed his crutch. He was about thirty years old; belonged to a very respectable family of a grade which a friend of mine used to call the "secondary formation" of New England society; had been educated at Yale, had become reckless in his habits, spent his patrimony, and as a make-shift had espoused democracy, taken up the then insignificant occupation of a country editor, and was laying about him unmercifully, battering this venerable prejudice and knocking down that time-honored dogma, to the great disgust of the cocked-hats and knee-buckles. He called the Puritans old women, and delighted to "throw stones at their windows and hear them scream," as he described in his paper his malignant attacks upon the established order of things. Nobody was so thoroughly hated far and near; nobody got such double-headed anathemas from the pulpit, nobody was held up so constantly as a warning to arrest the plunge of wicked young men into the pit of perdition, as Rufus Swift. The only person who appeared to be indifferent to the discharge of all this artillery was the individual at whom it was pointed. It was clear enough that he didn't care what the world did to him or said about him so long as he had an unfailing supply of Jamaica rum and Virginia

leaf tobacco. All the political and moral problems of the day were soluble in them, and could be held in solution by them forever; that is, as long as Mr. Swift had any earthly interest in anything, and beyond such interest he never looked. He had adopted that comprehensive maxim found ready to hand, and couched in the imperative mood: "Let the devil take the hindmost."

Mr. Filer had not been slow to discover the merits of Mr. Swift, and to avail himself of them. Mr. Swift had what Mr. Filer had not. Mr. Swift had book-culture and was well connected. Mr. Filer had neither of these qualifications; but then he had money, and Mr. Swift wanted money. Why not buy Swift out of hand and own him? The arrangement would make them both comfortable. Mr. Swift had no objection to being owned. There were several wants in his nature that pointed to such a disposition of himself. He was always libelling somebody and getting into limbo for it. Libelling people was necessary for his existence. He wanted somebody to go bail for him. He cared little about the *infinite*, but he dearly loved the *indefinite*, and what so indefinite as the prurient democracy of that day? He could not get along without an ideal, (I suppose there never was a dog that lived without one,) and he must have a specious one that he could lie about by representing it *inversely* to its real qualifications, without the possibility of exhausting it. Mr. Filer supplied that want. He was bad in so many ways, that it brought the imagination finely into play to represent him as *good* in all those ways; sublimating every depravity into a virtue and blazoning it with rhetoric. This game with counters, making black things stand for white ones and base metals for pure gold, was bewitching to Mr. Swift. The poetry of misrepresentation was the only one of the fine arts that had any fascination for him. So, to make a long story short, Mr. Filer bought Mr. Swift (or rather the equity of redemption in him) at a good round sum, and undertook

to clear off the incumbrances—bad habits—vicious propensities—personal enmities—crowbar libel suit—and all the rest. Such a purchase would have made a bankrupt of any body else ; but Mr. Swift was an article that Mr. Filer wanted to use in his business ; as necessary to him as a snake is to an Egyptian juggler.

Mr. Swift stated the thing very concisely when he told Mr. Filer one day, in a gush of frankness, that he couldn't expect to carry on such recondite philosophical experiments without powerful chemicals.

"After you have got possession of *me*," he added, "you will have at your command every thing that is a known enemy to life in all its possible forms ; suitably labelled with proper directions and safely confined by stoppers that defy corrosion. Prussic acid, corrosive sublimate and rats-bane may be a *little stimulating* to federalism, but they only tend to make it delirious and unmanageable. Give the beast *real poison* if you want to kill it. If you want to curdle and dissolve it with the thousandth part of a drop—with only just smelling of the vial—administer *me* to it."

So, as I have said, Mr. Filer bought Mr. Swift and *The Mercury* and every other deadly thing appertaining to him, and took the risk of the incumbrances that the world, the flesh and the devil had upon the property.

"Come in, Rufus. *Crawl in*, you old viper ! Don't be afraid. You are among friends, folks of your own kidney," said his proprietor with a patronizing blandness.

"Deacon Trowbridge, this is my *very particular* friend, Mr. Rufus Swift, the editor of *The Mercury*."

"Very glad to know you, sir," responded the deacon with a lofty wave of the hand. "I knew your grandfather. He was a very rich man. Remarkably sagacious, prosperous, scrubbing man, sir. Took care of the pennies and let the pounds take care of themselves. Gave away a great deal to foreign missions ; took a deep interest in the poor Indian ; was an active member of the church, and always went a delegate to the consociation and association, and acquitted himself with credit, too. I remember him when I was a boy.

He lived six miles below my father's, in the valley. He kept a little shop there and sold nuts and candies. We must creep before we walk, you know. He made fortunate investments in Western lands, or rather he was obliged to make them for a debt, and they rose on his hands and made him rich. A very enterprising person, sir. He married a lady of good family. I have often heard my father, Deacon Aaron, say that it was surprising how your grandfather got up in the world. He was a *very respectable man*, sir !”

“I am glad he was, deacon. I wish he had been richer for my sake. I had some of his money ; just enough to make my fingers itch. It never did me any good. I spent half of it in going through college and finding out what a myth Homer was, what a dyspeptic Virgil was, what a prig Horace was, what a ranter Cicero was, what a fop Cæsar was, what a drunkard Alexander was, and what a *fool* I am. I got rid of the other half in six months, drinking Jamaica rum, smoking tobacco, and reflecting upon the beauties of a well-spent life. That's all the good the old gentleman ever did *me*. Nobody ever sent me a delegate anywhere. I don't own an *acre* of Western land.”

“You don't avail yourself of your religious privileges. I am afraid you have sinned against great light, young man,” said Deacon Trowbridge, solemnly.

“Never mind, deacon,” interposed Mr. Filer, picking his front teeth with his finger nail, and looking at the big gold seal that depended from Deacon Zalmon's fob. “Let by-gones be by-gones. Every dog has his day. You have had yours ; I'm agoing to have mine. I'm agoing to fling to the breeze the glorious stars and stripes. I'm agoing to hang out my banner on the outward wall ; I'm agoing,” he continued, with increasing energy, rising, performing two of his very highest steps, setting his feet down just where he took them up, and making a tremendous flourish with his arms, “I'm agoing to see the star-spangled banner of democracy waving its silken folds and floating, floating, floating from the battlements—of eternity !”

"Wouldn't it be better," asked Mr. Swift, with an expression of mild surprise in his eye, "wouldn't it be better to say the battlements of Heaven? *That* is a *locality*—at least so they say. But the battlements of an *abstract idea*—really, Mr. Filer, the mind has a difficulty in grasping it."

"That's because you hain't got the imagination to do it. The abstract is greater than the concrete. The battlements of the abstract are grander than anything relating to—to—a—this—*terrene*, as Milton calls it. I like the expression, and I'll have it so. The battlements of eternity is a very grand expression. It is—a—beautiful example of the—a—*palpable obscure*! Do you understand me?"

"I seem to see a faint adumbration of your meaning 'turn forth its silver lining on the night,'" answered Mr. Swift, looking at the ceiling with a wistful gravity.

"Well, then let me alone next time," said Mr. Filer.

"That's more than you do for me," answered Mr. Swift. "Here it is Wednesday morning and my first form not struck off yet. You forget that Wednesday comes next before Thursday, and that Thursday is publishing day. What the devil did you call me down for if you don't want me? I've got a peeler for Justice Hyde this time. It'll skin him from head to heel. I spent the whole of last Sunday writing it, and it is not in type yet."

"The Sabbath day?" said Deacon Trowbridge with a scowl.

"Yes, why not?" asked Mr. Swift, with a defensive wave of his crutch. "Why not?"

"Because it is against the laws of God and man, sir."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Swift, "is it? I was never a delegate to the association, don't you see?"

"It is Sabbath-breaking, sir. Don't you know what that is?"

"I'm not well read up on that thesis. Do cram me for an examination, deacon. I dare say it will come off soon."



"I dare say it will," replied the deacon, with a warning shake of the head; "sooner than you think, perhaps."

"Is there anything about it in the Saybrook Platform? You have no idea of the depth of my ignorance on these subjects, deacon."

"Come, come," broke in Mr. Filer impatiently. "We have had a great deal too much of this. You know I told you at the outset, deacon, that you must show your own colors. And *I tell you*, Rufus, that your conduct is very extra-ordinary. There's a red rim about your eyes. I didn't notice it before. You've been drinking."

"I'm not red about the iris, am I?" asked Mr. Swift with profound simplicity. "It must be owing to my scholastic pursuits; close application, don't you think, Zeb?"

"You ought to be the best judge of that," answered Zebulon. He was as gruff as a bear, and had been ever since he entered the office.

"Well, never mind," said Mr. Filer. "Keep quiet, Rufus. If you *will get drunk*, you must take the consequences. I'm not very scholastic, as you call it. But I know how to use figurative language. It is the natural con—what d'ye call it?"

"Concatenation?" suggested Mr. Swift, meekly.

'Hold your tongue, Rufus. Conformation—faculty—genius! That's what it is. Genius! But I must have order here. I dare say you know enough to understand what I have to say.'

'I never get drunk *here*,' said Mr. Swift, pointing to his forehead.

"Then let me go on with my story."

Without more ado, Mr Filer stated all the facts necessary to a thorough understanding of his own situation and that of Deacon Trowbridge quite briefly, and in tolerable English. I don't mean to say that his language was patrician, but he had picked up enough of the good old phrases from the elementary law-writers to make himself understood in spite of the vulgar local-

isms and ambitious flashiness that he was unable, from association, to keep out of his speech. He didn't mince matters, but called things by their right names, associating his own destiny with that of Deacon Zalmon, till the latter hemmed and hawed several aristocratic reservations, but did not venture to utter them in words. It was clear that this dunghill fowl was the cock of the walk, and was not afraid to strike his spurs into the plumage of any other bird of whatever pretensions. He had both the deacon and Rufus Swift in his power now and could compel them to make common cause with him. To keep up the metaphor, he intended to feather his own nest with them.

Deacon Trowbridge and Mr. Swift both felt it; the one writhing under it, and the other chuckling over it as a capital joke, but neither of them remonstrating. Mr. Filer had their secrets and interests in his waistcoat pocket, and they had nothing of his to play against these cards, for he had already committed his secrets to the ample bosom of the democracy with a faith truly sublime. Still he was not satisfied to rest in faith without works. The nature of those works raised only one question in his mind. Would they be efficacious? That was all that he cared to know.

When he had finished his narration Mr. Swift inquired:

"Now, Mr. Filer, if I understand you rightly, it is expected of me to go through Stanyan's society from house to house, see every member of it—I mean every democrat—and do the parson as much injury with this class of his own people as I can, while, at the same time, wherever I find a good opportunity I am to put in a word for you as the proposed standard-bearer of our cause in the coming election? We are to kill two birds with one stone. Is that it?"

"That's just it," said Mr. Filer, "and you are to use a deal of caution. You are to be as unscrupulous as——"

"As the devil?" asked Mr. Swift.

"Yes," responded Mr. Filer with a wink.

"I think you can trust me for *that*," replied Mr. Swift with a diffident look.

"You'll need to handle some of them gingerly," said the deacon.

"Lie to them, you mean, don't you, deacon?"

"Well not exactly—lie——"

"Oh, tell them the truth? Very well. Now I understand you," said Mr. Swift.

"I mean that you are to be wise as a serpent and harmless as——"

"No, you don't, deacon," said Mr. Filer. "Now, Rufus, let me explain to you *precisely* what the deacon means. He means that you are to be left to your own discretion as to measures, only you are to accomplish the object at all hazards. If the truth will do, tell it. If lying is necessary, make use of it—prudently, of course; all the creatures of God are to be used prudently. That's what the deacon means—you understand it, Rufus? There will be all sorts of persons to be brought round; saints and sinners, people in robust health, sick people, nervous people, old farmers that are tough, old maids that are squeamish, young folks and especially pretty girls."

"Hoh, yes; as many as you like of *them*," cried Mr. Swift, showing his irreproachable teeth.

"Stop your noise, Rufus," said Mr. Filer, rising to enforce his sentiments with another climax. "I say you are to do all this and whatever else is needed to carry out your point. Especially, you are not to forget *me*. You are not to lose sight of the American eagle. You know what Junius says about *him*. You see I'm deep in the state papers. You must take every reasonable opportunity to give federalism a dig. You must call it faction. Faction is a very hateful nickname. You see, deacon, as I am getting a little aristocratic, I dip into the writings of the British nobility now and then. You are not to forget, Rufus, what my Lord Bolingbroke said on that subject. 'The spirit of faction may roll in gilded folds and hiss and threaten and cast its venom about it; but the spirit of liberty, like

the divine rod of Aaron, will swallow up all the serpents of the magician.' There's figurative language for you. That's what I call genius. Magician ! Stick that into Stanyan. It's a taking nickname, eh deacon ?"

"Excellent," replied Deacon Trowbridge.

"Well, all right," said Mr. Filer. "We all have our parts. 'Act well your part, there all the honor lies.' A capital sentiment. It is one of Pope's. He was a very pious man. No matter *what* the part is, the acting of it is all. Now for the action of disseizin. I'll have the writ in the hands of the sheriff in two hours. Good bye, gentlemen," and with a wave of both his hands Mr. Filer dismissed his clients.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### AT BAY.

THE time had now arrived when it was necessary for Dart and me to return to the college. I think from his manner that it was very irksome to him to take leave of his friends. I am sure it was to me. I left with a boding apprehension of evil brooding over me.

It seemed as if everybody that I was leaving behind was bidding me adieu for the last time.

The news of the legal steps taken to dispossess the society of the parsonage property had spread far and wide, and was the universal theme of conversation. My father was keenly alive to it, and could think and talk of little else. In this, my mother fully sympathized with him. She loved Dr. Stanyan, and keenly felt the effect of the blow so cruelly aimed at him. Her health was very much broken by this and by the anxiety caused by the mental condition of her father, who now scarcely spoke to any one and hardly appeared to notice passing events. My grandmother sustained the burden of her sorrow uncomplainingly, maintaining her never failing vigil with gentle equanimity.

Mr. Barker walked to and fro, silent but for the echo of his foot-fall that sounded like the wearisome drip

from the eaves in a rainy summer's day. He might have been dead so far as any communication with the outer world was concerned. Even his late fear of death from disease or fire or some other calamity, that aroused him to such a demonstrative pitch, would have been a relief to his wife. But it was cankering to the heart of the poor old lady to sit hour after hour looking up wistfully at his face, watching and reading her destiny in it. "If he would only take interest enough in anything to complain of it," she said; "but this silence stifles me."

The day before our departure, as I sat with my mother in my own room looking out of the window, a chaise stopped in front of the house. We had been so much occupied in conversation that neither of us noticed its approach. Without a hint from eye or ear I knew who was inside before I could see the shadow of a bonnet or the fluttering of a ribbon. I felt my heart beating violently and the blood tingling in my face. Dr. Stanyan alighted and handed out Marcella, while yet the guilty flush lingered in my cheek. No corresponding tinge suffused her's. There was a pride in her eye that I had never seen there before, and as she walked up toward the gate, her step crushed the yellow buttercups defiantly as if they were her mortal enemies. My father received our visitors at the door while my mother and I hurried down stairs.

Marcella was standing in the entry when I took her hand, while my mother kissed the pallid cheeks that even at the first touch of this affectionate greeting trembled like water lilies with the pulse of the wave when the wind ruffles it. Tears came into her eyes, and she fell upon my mother's neck and sobbed so violently that Dr. Stanyan put his arm around her waist and drew her gently into the parlor. As he led her to the sofa he said:

"No, Marcie. You must not go on in this way. We have had too much of it already. Your health will suffer for it."

"I do not care what happens to me," she said with

an angry flush on her cheek and a glance of fire that seemed in a moment to consume the tears in her eyes. "It may be wrong to hate him, but it is human, and I do and will hate him—hate him to the end of my life!"

"Remember that he is a man and a brother," remonstrated her father.

"Deacon Trowbridge is neither," exclaimed Marcella. "He deserves neither forgiveness nor mercy in this world or the next. After all that you have done here—after the sacrifice of a precious, precious lifetime to him and such as he; to be thwarted and scoffed and reviled! It is not that I shrink from being turned into the street. I would beg my bread beneath the wild cherry trees in the hedges of the highways, and after sharing my last crust with you lie down and die content. But the ingratitude of it breaks my heart."

She went on sobbing as if there were no soundings to the depths of her mortification and grief.

"I am ashamed of you, Marcie," he said. "But I must upbraid myself, not you. It must be my fault that my instructions have been thrown away on you. This self-condemnation stings me more cruelly than the malice of my enemies. I have been able to steel my heart against that. That you are not a woman but a child—this unmans me."

In a moment, the angry glow had flitted from her cheeks, the haughty fire had vanished from her eyes. As she rose and moved toward him in a wavering, child-like way and threw her arms about him, I felt that there is something greater in the world than house or lands or fortune; something that hatred cannot canker, nor malice tear, nor slander tarnish, nor sorrow overwhelm—the unchanging, unquenchable light of love.

"Forgive me, father," she murmured; "forgive me all of you," she added in a fuller tone that filled the room, like the undulations of bell-music. She was standing by the window near her father, where the sunbeams blended their lusters with the ripples of her dark brown hair. She looked almost as tall as he, and the

resemblance that she bore to him was more striking than ever as she glanced from one to the other of us and upon me last, so as to include us all in the unexpected apology

"Forgive me, I have dealt with this wrong done to my father, as if it were a personal and not a public one. I heartily repent it."

As she begged pardon of us, may I solicit that of the reader for my own enthusiasm? I cannot help exhibiting it even in this narrative and after the lapse of so many years. Her finely moulded forehead, just rounded enough to attemper it with the feminine graces without marring its directness of intellectual and moral expression; the light of her eyes so nobly truthful, the quivering of her lips, the crimson glow so eloquent and ingenuous, harmonizing all her features as twilight does a lovely horizon, eliminating from dim outlines the spiritually good and pure—even at the close of a long life I look back upon them, as I saw them in the flush of that moment, revealing to me more clearly than ever how unworthy I was to love her and how wide a space separated her from me.

When Marcella had reseated herself, Dr. Stanyan addressed himself to my father

"Brother Everett," he said, with a slow utterance as if weighing every word: "I have thought this matter over and tried to deal honestly with all the parties concerned in it. As my daughter has said, I have given my life to this people. I have done it partly from a sense of christian duty and partly from human motives. Fifteen years ago I was waited on by a committee from a college corporation in a neighboring state and solicited to take charge of their institution. The salary offered me was more than three times as large as that paid me by this society. The fellowship of a literary circle, the advantages offered me by a large library and the opportunity of exercising my faculties in a sphere more congenial than I could find here, were great temptations. I thought the proposition over and over and took time to deliberate upon it before giving

an answer. I went into the meeting house and saw the dear faces around me—men, women and children that I loved. I visited them at their homes. I thought to myself how much more room there was in my heart, and how much more sunshiny were its chambers for my having invited you all into it and entertained you there so long. I thought of the baptisms, births, Thanksgivings, weddings, funerals that had endeared the living and the dead to me by such indissoluble ties. I thought of my many experiences, the companionship and communion of souls so long journeying one way. I walked out in the morning upon the ridges and saw the sun dissolving the mist. I stood on the tops of the knolls under the pines and saw the purple sunset fade out and the last twilight gleam lose itself in the lake. I could see trails of recollection and association netting one another with innumerable meshes until all the little eminences and slopes wavered in my eye and the shadows of the hollows grew dim with my tears. I waited a week, doubting, dreaming, longing. Then I wrote a letter, blurred indeed, but in a firm hand, saying that I could not bring my mind to go. From that day to this I have never cast a wandering glance beyond the boundaries of my people, or so much as thought that there was any other road to Heaven open to me than the one that leads up thither from these hills. I have labored on and lived and loved as if all the rest of the world belonged to another orb outside of my sphere and subject to a different plan of redemption. Joy and sorrow, health and sickness, life and death—I have shared them all with you. I have even gone so far as to mark out my last resting place under the trees that I long ago planted over my wife's grave. Now comes a fresh temptation. An officer in my own church has lifted his hand against me. I have long known his hatred for me, at first secret, afterward defiant, now exterminating. I have tried to judge charitably of him. I have sought to conciliate him. I have endeavored to stand outside of myself and look at him as if he and I were strangers. But the evidence is so strong as to force



upon my mind the conclusion that he is a bad man and is moving toward wicked ends. I have only one of two courses open to me, to yield to him or to resist him. Which shall I adopt?"

My father was so deeply moved by the minister's story that it was some time before he could make any answer; at length he said:

"Dr. Stanyan, I have been a spectator of this attempt to undermine your influence, long before it took its present malignant form. I think you will admit that with all my many faults, I am loyal to my friends. I believe I never betrayed a friend. I must always rely on the authority of some one. Before you came here I rested too much on that of books written by men long dead. But the dead are cold. We need contact with flesh and blood. I have found warmth in you. I cannot live without you. You ask me what you are to do. I answer, fall back upon the old Hebrew mode of warfare. The forbearance of the new dispensation has exhausted itself. Make real the denunciations of the prophet. Follow the example of David. Choose five smooth stones out of a brook. The very first of them that passes from the sling will sink into the head of the giant. Break your enemy like a potter's vessel. Hew Agag in pieces before the Lord. I will enlist under your leadership. We cannot hope to be wiser than Samuel and Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Since you ask my counsel, I give it without reserve. Drive out the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Hittites, and possess the land!"

"But can we not find a safer guide?" asked the minister. "Is there not a greater than Moses?"

My father drew up the corners of his mouth, and with his thumb and fore-finger pressed his eyes nearer together as if more intently to focus his vision. He sat a moment thus, and then looked keenly at the clergyman. The war-sparkles centralized in that glance, it seemed to me, would have burnt a diamond to a crisp. What a soldier he would have made, thought I to myself! Then he said with suppressed emotion:

"Love was not the only attribute of the master. He,

too, carried the scourge and laid it upon the backs of the money-changers and of them that sold doves, even under the roof of the temple."

"But in the last hours He commanded Peter to put up his sword," replied the clergyman. "Besides, He might do what we may not."

"I beg your pardon," cried my father unrelentingly. "He has left us a rule. The incorrigible brother is to be treated as a heathen man and a publican."

"Ay, but not until after we have forgiven him seventy times seven times."

"We have already complied with that regulation," said my father.

"But we are to take certain preliminary steps," interposed Dr. Stanyan. "We are to remonstrate with him; we are to summon judicious friends; we are to bring him before the church ere we call him Maranatha."

"The sooner we do it then the better," answered my father fiercely. "I will be ready with my vote."

"That is what I have made up my mind to do," returned the minister. "He shall have the full benefit of a trial. The other requisitions, such as private remonstrance and remonstrance before individuals have, as you say, been already complied with. I will confront him before the church. When shall it be done?"

"As soon as a meeting can be called. I will have it done at once," said my father. "I will go from house to house and see all the members of the church."

"No," remonstrated Dr. Stanyan. "That would be contrary to the spirit of the order. That would be forestalling the action of the brethren. Call the meeting and leave the matter there. Come, daughter. Now we will go home. Don't shrink from that word, my child. We have a home yet. Something whispers to me that we shall triumph."

"Be that as it may," responded Marcella, fervently clasping his hand, "where thou goest I will go, where thou stayest I will stay, and there will I be buried."

She kissed by mother, shook hands with my father and then took my arm to be handed into the chaise.

"Good-bye, Frank," she said. "Don't forget the valedictory."

She turned her face away from me as she spoke. I could see nothing but the black hat, the grey dress, striving in vain to conceal the outlines of the flexible figure, and the white hand slipping slowly from my grasp. Thus ended the summer vacation.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE VALEDICTORY.

DART and I returned to the college and resumed our studies in the old room together with earnest alacrity. I cannot tell what my own behavior was, but I strove to be natural in my manner toward him and I believe I was. If I succeeded, he was less fortunate. He tried too hard to please me. His voice and looks and actions were all constrained. We occupied one apartment in the day time, but had separate bedrooms. In study hours we sat down, each at his own table, and plodded on without intermission. So far as a casual observer could discern, we might have been kept in our chairs by enchantment of the books that occupied us, with no hope of ever being liberated. Sometimes, in the intervals of application, I caught his eye watching me. Instantly he would turn it away and fix it upon the open page before him. I could see by the fixedness of his gaze that he was thinking of something not to be found in any book.

We went to the recitation room and returned from it in company. On the way he would often make unexpected inquiries and take no notice of my answers to them. Then he would break out in a gush of mirthfulness and as suddenly subside into moodiness. In the intervals of study he would revive old reminiscences of village life, school boy frolics and incidents common to us both, or such as had happened under our observation and had served to amuse us in former years. He

called up the peculiarities of our neighbors at home and set them forth by anecdotes, of which he had good store, always omitting to speak of Marcella or Charlotte, whose names by tacit consent were interdicted in our conversations.

Meanwhile the prospects of the different aspirants for the college appointments began to be discussed in the class, and the adherents of each grew more eager in their advocacy of the claims of their respective favorites. Not a word passed between Dart and me on this topic. His anxiety about the examination as the time drew on was more and more apparent. He talked with his friends freely about it, and, as he was very popular in the class, his merits and mine were openly canvassed. There were only two other candidates who could be called competitors with Dart and me, and the cause of both of these was soon abandoned as hopeless. I was a quiet and reserved person and had few confidants. These were very ardent, and frequently met me privately to tell me what they had heard and to inspire me with confidence by words of encouragement. Whenever the name of either of us was called in the recitation-room all eyes would be turned toward the party thus placed on trial, and during the rendering of the text or demonstration of the problem a painful stillness pervaded the apartment, as if life and death were hanging on the issue. The professors were silent as the grave, and neither by word nor token gave any intimation of what would be the result.

Timid as I was, I was strangely collected on these occasions and watched my own work and that of Dart with a steady eye. I knew when I had made a mistake or gained an advantage as well as if I had been an indifferent witness of the contest.

Dart retained his old dashing manner, but exhibited a nervousness that I had not expected. He glanced about the room, looked at the professor's desk, kept moving his hands, clinching his fingers and writhing in his seat in a way that was not natural to him.

At night I noticed the same restlessness in him. We

slept with our bedroom doors open, and I could hear him tossing his head upon his pillow and turning from side to side for hours and hours. He must have thought that I was asleep, for I lay all this while perfectly motionless. For the last three months of this struggle I averaged only four hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, and sometimes I lay awake the live-long night and counted the hours, as the clock in the observatory tolled them off, thinking over the philosophical proposition, the knotty Greek or Latin passage, or more generally the steps in the mathematical theorem—as that science taxed me more than all my other studies. Then for the first time I learned what all my acquaintances had long known, that my memory, especially for words, was very grasping and accurate. I could lie with my eyes shut and repeat page after page from the Greek tragedies, historians and orators; and as for Cicero and Horace there were few disputed texts that I had not conned by heart and hammered into the best English that I could command.

Winter passed, and spring came with birds and seabreezes and flowers, but brought no relaxation. The same keen intentness, the same faithful application, the same still night watchings, the same motion of the lips repeating the syllables of the dead languages, the same counting of the strokes of the clock—testified to an identity intensifying itself in me from day to day and summoning up all its energies to meet the coming shock. Sometimes I would walk out alone among the junipers and savins with my head drooping and my arms hanging carelessly by my side, or sit down under the shade of a wild-pear tree and muse and doubt and wonder how it would be. The image of Marcella would come, whether bidden or unbidden, into the company of the other creatures that floated in the atmosphere of my reverie and seem to smile upon me. Then would come back to me in all its distinctness our parting, the averted face, the black hat, the grey dress, the glimmer of the white hand as it eluded my grasp, the inspiring admonition. So I passed the time.

At last the morning of the day dawned that was to decide my fate. It was June. The wide branching elms were in full leaf, and looked grand and picturesque as the cathedrals of mediæval days, lifting on high their innumerable arches propping the vault of the summer sky, and casting their shadows along the streets. Dart and I waited in our own room until the last admonitory summons of the bell rung out, and then we sallied forth together.

The hall was crowded when we entered and took our seats. A scarcely perceptible murmur like a whisper of inquiry—say, rather, a sigh, which was the suppression of so many aspirations—met us, with the glances of anxious eyes, and there was a long oppressive interval of silence. Instead of posting the result on the chapel door, according to the usual custom, it was to be orally announced.

Finally the president began to rustle a paper that he held in his hand, and in a suppressed voice said:

“Give your attention, young gentlemen.”

This polite preliminary was entirely unnecessary. Nobody appeared to breathe. I felt a stunning sound in my ears, a whirl in my brain, a trembling in my limbs. Was I awake or did I dream?

I was not sure in which of these two conditions I was, until I found myself surrounded by a crowd of eager faces and heard and felt irrepressible congratulations. The oracle had spoken. I had won the Val-edictory.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

MR. PHILLIPS.

GOING southerly from our village by a gradual descent a distance of about six miles, you came to the border of a lovely valley, hemmed in on the left by high, perpendicular walls of rock and on the east and south by steep, grassy hills. Two sparkling streams, the one having its origin in our lake and the

other coming down from the northwest, meet in this valley and form a river that winds through green meadows and finds its way out by a gorge at the southern border into a lower region of country. In this secluded spot the first settlement in our county was made by the English, more than a hundred years before I was born. It would have been the county seat had not its inhabitants, dreading the contaminating influence of a Court House and a bevy of lawyers, piously voted that they would tolerate among them no such drawbacks to civilization. But long before the period of which I write, the insinuating profession of the green bag had crept in here and had gained such a firm footing that nothing could dislodge it.

There were several of these gentlemen, of various qualifications, in the full tide of practice, of whom the most prominent was Mr. Charles Phillips, known by everybody for miles around for his wit and learning, his independence of character, and especially for his colloquial gifts, wherein he excelled all other persons whom I ever knew. He had traveled hither from a neighboring state when a young man in feeble health, and had been so attracted by the charming isolation of the valley, that he was not long in making up his mind to spend his days in it. He soon recovered, and became a general favorite with the people in spite of their prejudice against democrats and Episcopalians, of whom he was one of the chief. He had in early life defied the sturdy rules of morality common to the Puritans, had shocked their ears with his profanity, stung them with ridicule and illustrated their peculiarities by grotesque anecdotes, of which he had an inexhaustible stock at his command. Nobody else in those days could have said and done half the anomalous things that he did without making atonement for it in the county jail or by paying heavy fines.

But somehow he had a knack of reaching people's hearts, and his nature so outran his speech that no one would take his word for it that he was as wicked as he represented himself. Everybody claimed the exclusive

right to find fault with him and was ready to take up the cudgels for him if he was attacked by anybody else. Besides, as he grew older he grew mellow, as good wine does; he was more tractable in his disposition, more gentle in his manners, without losing anything of the effervescence and aroma of his wit.

When he was about fifty years old he had the misfortune to break one of his legs. He was never able to take much bodily exercise after the accident, and I suppose it was partly from this cause that he soon grew so corpulent that he was obliged to go about in a four wheeled carriage made to accommodate only one person. Indeed an extra seat would have been a temptation for an obliging man like him to overload his vehicle, for it was as much as one horse could do to draw Mr. Phillips over such a hilly country as ours.

When he was about sixty years old he suddenly left off the habit of profane swearing, which had before given rise to much scandal, and became a communicant of the Episcopal church. From the progressive order of his mind he was not much in love with puritanism, which he called the "dry rot of the age," and looked upon democracy as the grand cure for social evils. He ought to have been a federal, for there was not another man of my acquaintance who was in personal appearance, cast of features, and a certain aristocratic grace of manner better fitted to set off a wig and velvet small-clothes. But then he never could have breathed in tight-fitting garments. His lungs and circulating machinery wanted more room than they could have found within such straightened limits; and as for top-boots, his very legs would have cried out against such tyranny. Then again his impetuosity, his aptitude for finding the shortest way to a subject, or an object, could never have endured the restraints of such a costume. He made up for the want of these stately qualifications, which were then a chief prop of New England society, by a nimbleness of attack and retreat, a fecundity of imagery, a wealth of colloquial diction that would have been a discordant jumble under the



handling of any one else, but which he moulded so plastically and with such a continuity of force, that it became a unit of happy adjustments and concentric motions quite bewitching to more commonplace natures.

When I add that Mr. Phillips had a head of almost colossal proportions, a full grey eye that could be soft and merry or grave and emphatic, to reflect the whole range and variety of his mental images, a small mouth indicating mobility rather than firmness, a general leonine contour of head and face, a clear complexion, fair hair, a white and shapely hand, a facility of gesture unusual with persons of his immense bulk, I have done all I can in a mere pen and ink sketch to individualize him.

One sultry afternoon in June, as his custom was, he ordered his carriage and went forth to pay a little visit to his farm that lay on the slope of one of those green hills that helped to form the southeastern frame of the valley. He wound along the borders of the ledges overgrown with wiry cedars and white-pines shading sandy hillocks that loaded the hot air with pitch-smelling odor, noting, as he drove leisurely on, every inflection of the scenery with open-hearted sympathy, and smilingly addressing himself to the society of happy thoughts. The farm was about half a mile from the public road, and had to be approached by a pent highway constructed by Mr. Phillips himself, and terminating at a rustic gate on the northern border of the property.

He passed through this gate and entered a fine chestnut grove, that led up, by a winding way, to the crown of a hill overlooking the farm and commanding the picture of vale and winding river, jagged precipices and vapor-veined hills, with patches of blue sky intervening, that lay beneath him and bounded the western and southern horizon.

Here he alighted again, and tying his horse to a witch-hazel he took a cocoanut shell drinking cup from the vehicle and sauntered to a shelving rock near by, at the foot of which bubbled up a clear spring.

The old man stooped, filled the cup with the glittering drops and sipped them with an indolent zest while he looked off upon the beautiful valley and the green hills in the distance. He had not sat there long when his privacy was invaded by the stamp of a horse's feet. He turned his head and saw through an opening in the trees a visitor approaching. "Who is that? Holbrook? No. Holbrook is too short. Benedict? No. Benedict never was known to mount a horse in his life. Col. Farrand? The Colonel is a big, bony man. He doesn't ride half so well as that, either. Besides, this apparition has a black coat and a stiff white neck-cloth. He's a priest. On nearer view he's a fine portly gentleman, whoever he is. Well, well, well, I wonder—who—it is."

"How do you do, Mr. Phillips?" said Dr. Stanyan, riding up to the rock, lifting his black beaver and dismounting. He had firm hold of the hand of Mr. Phillips before the old man could make out who he was.

"Parson Stanyan! Lord bless me, I don't see so well as I used to, I'm afraid. I'm not sure but I was asleep. I'm sure I've been dreaming. What the devil sends you here? Stop, I forgot. You don't run of errands for *him*? You're always hunting him down. He's your natural game. Well, you couldn't have come to a better place. You'll always find him in my company."

Dr. Stanyan laughed.

"I am hunting the devil just now," he said, "and knew you could help me find him."

"Well, well, well. Come sit down and take a drink. I never drink any stronger liquor than that," said Mr. Phillips, reaching out to the sparkling pearls and scooping up a cupful; "there's a bumper of the real Lachryma Christi—a very old wine, parson. It is a part of Adam's vintage that he had in his cellar in Paradise. It burst the cobwebs then and has never been bottled since."

"It is of excellent flavor," said the minister, drink-

ing and setting down the cup. "You are right in divining the object of my visit. I am in search of the devil in good earnest."

"The devil had been lurking about in the holes of these rocks long before ever the Puritans came here from the seacoast," said Mr. Phillips, with a merry laugh, "and I don't suppose their coming would have the effect to drive him away."

"Something serious is the matter with me and I think you can help me," said Dr. Stanyan.

In a moment the expression of Mr. Phillips's face underwent a transformation. If he could help anybody he always felt that the person in distress was conferring a favor on him. He motioned with his hand to signify his impatience.

Thus invited, Dr. Stanyan began, and gave a minute history of the whole affair between himself and Deacon Trowbridge. He was so natural and whole-hearted that he never could think of trying to make a display, and I suppose it was on this very account that he could not help being eloquent. When he had concluded Mr. Phillips's eyes were not so clear as they had been at the beginning of the story, and his double chin was tremulous as our lake is when you drop a pebble in it.

"Well, well, well," he said at last, by degrees bringing his jostled mind up to its former equilibrium; "if you are looking for the devil you had better go home again. He doesn't live here: at least the *old one* doesn't. Can you give me the exact language of that clause in Juba Trowbridge's will, disposing of the parsonage property?"

"I thought you might like to see the whole contents of the document, and so I went to the probate office and procured a certified copy of it," replied the minister.

"Give it to me."

The lawyer took the paper, put on his spectacles and read it out in a muttering tone. When he had finished, he examined all the formal parts with care

and then glanced again at the date, and said abstractedly: "Over forty years ago. Over forty years—a—go."

Then he pulled off his spectacles, dropped his head on his breast and pressed his fat hands over his eyes, crumpling down his Grecian nose till he made a perfect pug of it. After a while he said:

"Haven't you got in your congregational machine a wheel called the association?"

"Yes."

"And another wheel called the consociation?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I suppose one is a kind of Superior Court with appellate jurisdiction from the local church, and the other is a sort of Supreme Court of Errors, eh?"

"Morally, yes," said Dr. Stanyan. "But they are both advisory. Neither has any power to compel the local church to do anything or refrain from doing anything."

"You don't mean to have me understand, parson, that these higher powers can't settle all matters of doctrinal controversy?"

"Yes, they can settle them according to the Saybrook Platform. But their decision would not bind our church. If we chose to abide by it, we should; if not, we should put any other construction on the platform that we liked. We have no presbyters or bishops, you know, outside the local church. By our interpretation every pastor is both presbyter and bishop."

"Aha! Well then, if your church will not take the advice of the association and consociation, what will *they* do about it?"

"They can do nothing but withdraw their fellowship from us," said Dr. Stanyan.

"But why don't you avail yourself of this advisory aid? It would be worth something. It would help to form public opinion. Public opinion is atmospheric in a country like this. Courts and jurors breathe it.

It is a musk that gets into the very law books. They all smell of it. Why don't you have the soundness of your teachings tested by these tribunals? Are you afraid of an adverse decision?"

"No; I think it would be favorable."

"Do you preach the same doctrine that Everett did?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"That's a difficult question," said the clergyman. "The mental constitution of one generation differs so much from that of another, that the very meaning of language is all the while shifting. Really I don't know whether I agree with Mr. Everett or not. I'm afraid I don't in all respects. I have never read his sermons. I don't think any man standing on the elevation offered by christianity to the present age, can see *anything* as it was seen from a lower point of observation forty years ago."

"You are right there," said Mr. Phillips. "This question of identity in morals as well as in persons is a difficult one. A boy is a very different creature from the man that he ultimately grows into, but the identity lives on through all stages of development, from the cradle to the grave, so that a man can say under oath, without perjury: 'Yes, I know this old man: I have been acquainted with him ever since he was a child.' The same thing may be true of doctrines, opinions, morality, faith, for aught I can see. I used to curse and swear. I grew older and more reflective. I didn't change my belief. At last I broke my leg. The suffering and the disability resulting from this accident intensified my belief, and led it to different stages of development. I set my heart to act conjointly with my reason to give my belief a certain direction. I said to myself—'Phillips, you are lame and corpulent. If you ever get to Heaven you can't go there on foot. You must have a staff. You must have vicarious legs.' I was confirmed. I brought the sacramental wine to my lips and put the sustaining bread upon my tongue, and shut up my eyes to keep away all outward things, while I tried to see God with my inner sight and feel

him with my spiritual touch. I am not sure, but I hope I have succeeded. If I have, I can still swear to my personal identity and to that of my belief—another, yet the same. Well, well, well. It's a strange thing, parson, altogether; a strange thing, this identity. I can't fathom it, but I can see that it has relations outside the natural world."

"Yes," said Dr. Stanyan. "It depends upon a multiplicity of relations; individual vision, distance of time and space, and a hundred other conditions. A clown stands below a cataract and sees the back-water carry a plank under the shelf of the rock, and he says, 'here are two rivers, one of them runs up stream.' He is ignorant that there are different currents governed by the force of laws that seem to conflict while they accord, and that the identity of the river is unimpaired. He does not know that but for the harmonious antagonism of the very forces which make the back-current, there would be no cataract, no river."

"True," said Mr. Phillips. "You and Jonathan Everett looked at the same truths from different levels. Had he stood where you do, he would have seen them as you do. That is our line of defence. But will the tribunal that is to settle this question stand where Everett did, and if so, will the jurors in the Trowbridge case be able to identify the things that you see with those he saw?"

"I'm afraid not," said the clergyman.

"I'm a great deal more afraid not than you are," said the lawyer, "for I know what material they are made of better than you do. The Puritans believed that they had discovered all the truth in the universe; that whoever claimed to see anything else, or more, was an impostor. Our courts and juries are made up of such men. Whatever they can't see, doesn't exist. That fortuitous concourse of atoms that they call their body of divinity is the sole providence of God to them. Everything else is Dagon. If one of our judges should find that new sharp threshing instrument having teeth 'which was promised by the prophet and was to

thresh the mountains and beat the hills small,' he'd walk round it and gape at it and sigh and snuffle and drawl out to it, 'What are you? You're neither a plow, nor a harrow, nor a cart, nor a drogue, nor a churn. I can see what you are. You are a device of Satan. I'll smash you.' Then he'd fetch it a blow with his judicial axe and slash it up for fire-wood."

"You caricature us," replied Dr. Stanyan.

"Not a jot," answered Mr. Phillips. "I know these fellows better than you do. I've practiced law under their administration. You have got out of the ice. For the purposes of this case I'm sorry for it. If your legs were frozen stark, they would let you alone. They will never forgive you for walking about. I tell you, we are in a dangerous situation. You say the deacon has retained Filer? Well, let me see. Filer belongs to the same political party that I do. He is a great scoundrel though, for all that. Perhaps I can manage him. He always likes to arbitrate his cases. As a general rule I don't. It's all hugger-mugger and division. Arbitrators are governed by only one principle, and that is to please both parties. But, as I said, this is a bad case. If we could get the right board now. What do you think?"

"I shall leave the matter entirely in your hands."

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Phillips. "It will have to be managed. I've half a mind to try it. The way will be to operate on Filer so as to make him name the very men we want. If I name anybody he'll object to him, of course. Are you sure that he has employed Swift to look up witnesses for him?"

"Yes, I have heard of him everywhere throughout the limits of my society."

"Very well. He's a little viper. It's not worth while to step on him, unless you have thick shoes. Perhaps I can make him bite Filer. I'll try it. If we arbitrate, what do you say to making a domestic thing of it, and choosing our men from your own neighbors? Is there anybody there whom you can trust?"

"I think so, I have many friends."

"Name some of them."

"How would Dr. Carew do?" asked Dr. Stanyan.

"Very well, but Filer would not consent to him."

"What would you say to Mr. Barker? He comes here to attend church sometimes."

"That is a capital suggestion, if we can get him. I'll try that. Does he ever go to hear you preach?"

"I never saw him in the meeting house in my life."

"All the better. Who next?"

"Mr. Garrett signed Deacon Trowbridge's petition against me, but I'm willing to trust him."

"Why?" inquired the lawyer.

"I think he has found out that he was deceived."

"Name another."

"Squire Pickett is an honest man. He would try to do right."

"His head is as tough as a pepperidge log. The grain of the wood runs all the way round the stick," said Mr. Phillips. "There's one good thing about Pickett. If once you get an idea into his head the devil can't get it out. What are his political sentiments?"

"Democratic."

"And Trowbridge is on the fence," said Mr. Phillips thoughtfully. "That's good. What are Pickett's religious tenets?"

"I am afraid he has none," said Dr. Stanyan.

"All the better for that. Filer would be much more likely to accept him. I'll go and see Swift to-morrow, and after I've talked with him I'll see Filer. By the way, parson, what would be the result if you should call a church meeting and try to censure the deacon?"

"Favorable, I hope, but I am not sure. There is one already warned for to-morrow."

"Well, you attend to that while I am looking after the arbitration. Don't come to a vote if you can't carry it. It might ruin us."

"I will be discreet," said Dr. Stanyan rising to go.

"Stop a minute and let me tell you a little story,"



said Mr. Phillips. "A few years ago we had here in the valley a house-carpenter named Smith. He was always bragging what he could build. But in fact he never did build anything except a reputation for lying and drunkenness. The boys used to call him the doctor. This Dr. Smith made it a point never to hear any subject spoken of without pretending to know more about it than anybody else. So the youngsters used to have him to the tavern, and, after treating him to flip, start abstruse subjects of conversation on purpose to draw him out. At last the war came on and the poor fellow was drafted to go to Saybrook to keep the British out of the Connecticut river. He was a great coward, and after an absence of two or three months he managed to be taken sick and get a furlough. As soon as he came home the young fellows flocked round him to hear the news. His war experience was greater than Gen. Washington's, and he knew more about civil affairs than Gov. Trumbull.

"'But I have always wanted to know something about the Saybrook Platform,' said Tom Lewis, one of the slyest dogs in the world. 'I have heard a great deal said about it, but I never could make head or tail of it. Did you see anything of it while you were at Saybrook?'

"'Did I see anything of the Saybrook Platform?' asked Dr. Smith, in a tone expressive of the utmost contempt for Tom's ignorance: 'I should rather think I ought to have seen it. I help build it. You could load and unload almost any craft there now if the mud wasn't so deep!'

Dr. Stanyan laughed.

"Don't put that question to me," he said.

"Oh Lord, no," replied Mr. Phillips, "I'm reserving that for Deacon Trowbridge."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## IMPARLING.

TRUE to his promise, Mr. Phillips called at the office of *The Mercury* the next morning and was fortunate enough to find Mr. Swift in a tolerable state of sobriety.

"I'm glad to see you, squire," said Rufus, prodding holes with his crutch in the newspapers that lay scattered about the floor, as he hobbled up to shake hands with his visitor: "Have a grog before you sit down; you look hot. A little Jamaica will cool you off."

"That is not the first time I ever heard," replied the lawyer, "that making up a big fire in a man's midriff would cool him; unless you alluded to the final cooling down process, I deny the fact."

"And for trial puts himself on the court," said the editor, swallowing an ounce of the beverage without sugar or water to qualify it.

"If you don't stop that young man, you'll publish a drunken paper by and by."

"If it doesn't stagger itself, it makes the federals stagger," said Mr. Swift. "Have you read my last libel on the crowbar justice? Doesn't that take the hide off his back?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid you'll lose some of *your* exterior coating too, before you have done with it. But what does it mean? I heard of you in my neighborhood the other day and you didn't drive down to see me. You promised to do it. I wanted to talk over political matters. Don't you know that we have an election coming off and need organization? What have you been doing on The Ridge. You saw Barker; can you do anything with him? If you could get him to help us we could carry the town."

"There is no hope of that, Mr. Phillips. He is worse than his son-in-law, Deacon Everett. If he could get at Jefferson he would tear him limb from limb."

"Why, man," replied Mr. Phillips with a look of incredulity; 'he's an Episcopalian. He must be a democrat. I don't know three federals in our church."

"Then you don't know old Barker," said Swift. "I thought I knew something about personal abuse. I ought to, for I have made it a study. But I can learn something from Barker. The only thing that he and I agree upon is religion, and one other subject; he doesn't like Deacon Everett, and I don't. What a Turk Everett is! I thought the man would turn me out of doors. I spent the night with Barker. He has got some Jamaica rum—at least he *had* some when I went there—that would do credit to any man. He talked and I drank. I tried to talk, but finally concluded to listen."

"He doesn't like Everett, eh?" asked Mr. Phillips.

"He doesn't like his christian character, I should think," said Mr. Swift with a chuckle.

"Well, can anything be done with Squire Pickett?"

"He will vote for the Jefferson candidate; he told me so," answered Mr. Swift.

"Did you see Miles Atwood?"

"Yes."

"How does he stand?"

"He was too drunk to stand. He told me himself he hadn't drawn a sober breath for a week. But his vote will be all right."

"Did you see Garrett?"

"Yes, I sounded him; but his mind, what little there is of it, was in such a muddle about Stanyan and the parsonage that I could get nothing out of him."

"Do you mean the Trowbridge law-suit?"

"Yes; he's full of it."

"Which side does he adopt?"

"I don't know, and I don't think he does. He says he is afraid Stanyan doesn't preach the real Everett doctrine."

"Who is the democratic candidate for Congress?"

Mr. Swift looked at the questioner suspiciously. "I have heard *your* name spoken of favorably," he said.

"If you hear anybody mention it again," said Mr. Phillips, "say that I am poor enough without that."

"You really mean so?" asked Mr. Swift.

"Yes; come, tell me honestly, who is your man?"

"What say you to Mr. Filer?"

"He wouldn't take a nomination."

"How do you know that?"

"He told me so last autumn."

"He was suspicious of you," said Mr. Swift.

"And so lied to me?"

"N—o—, not exactly *lied*."

"Come along with me," said Mr. Phillips, "and we will find out what he wants, if that is possible."

Thus challenged, Mr. Swift followed Mr. Phillips down stairs. They found Mr. Filer in the act of expatiating to a lady-client, who had petitioned for a divorce, upon the wrongs inflicted on her by her husband. It was evident from her manner that she had never before had a clear conception of the extent of these outrages; for she was stooping over a chair, with a pocket handkerchief to her face, in a spasmodic fit of weeping.

"Now you can go, madam. Don't forget to fetch your marriage certificate. The court sits on Tuesday; meet me in the lobby at half-past one. Don't cry, madam. I know he's a hellish brute; never mind. I'll expose him. I'll tear—a—his heart out. I'll,—I'll remember the hour," as Charles the First said to a—a—Cromwell. Remember. Good day, madam."

Mr. Filer bowed the lady out before he looked at Mr. Phillips, and then caught that gentleman's hand in both of his and wrung it in an ecstasy of welcome.

"My dear Phillips, my dear brother democrat, how are you? How is the ho-ly cause of liberty? Shall we give the federals, as Milton says in his speech on Unlicensed Printing, shall we give them 'a seven fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies?' Shall we give 'em that, eh? You know best. I only ask for information. I want to give 'em a dose of something

that will make 'em howl," said Mr. Filer with a terrific drawl and a wide flourish of his arms.

"I think that would be a good thing to give them," replied Mr. Phillips. "Where did you find the prescription?"

"Oh, I—a—picked it up! That's what I call more or less eloquent. It has a snap to't—it goes off like a trap," said Mr. Filer showing his teeth.

"I'm glad," said Mr. Phillips, "to find you so much interested in the cause. I suppose you have no personal motive to inspire you?"

"None in the world," answered Mr. Filer. "No—no personal motive in the world. I am inspired by principle, sir—nothing but principle."

"But principles are nothing without men," replied Mr. Phillips. "We must have candidates. Where, for instance, shall we find an available man for Congress?"

"I don't know," answered Mr. Filer, with a doubtful look, as if the idea had never occurred to him before. "I really don't know. I am so lost in the contemplation of the abstract—of the—a—illimitable soul—that—a—I forgot all about the body."

"That's where we differ," said Mr. Phillips. "I am looking for a body. What do you say, Filer, to standing body for this soul yourself?"

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"Upon my honor," interposed Mr. Swift, "I never thought of that before. Hang me if I don't think it's the very thing."

"Keep quiet, Rufus, I'm afraid you've been drinking," said Mr. Filer.

"Not a drop to-day," rejoined Mr. Swift.

"Really, Mr. Phillips, do you think I could stand any chance? You see I have so much confidence in your judgment and candor—really—you know all about these things, and I am so foolish and simple-hearted. Do you think I'm fit for it—*do* you?"

"You're the very man for the place," answered Mr. Phillips.

So the three went on and talked the whole matter over, and arranged the plan of the campaign with commendable minuteness. After they had settled everything apparently to Mr. Phillips's mind, the old gentleman arose, shook hands with the other two and took leave of them. He had left the room and shut the door, when, unexpectedly to Mr. Filer, he re-opened it, and stood holding the latch in his hand in a perplexed way, as if he had forgotten something.

"No matter!" he said at length, as if to himself.

"What is it? Stop," cried Mr. Filer, rushing toward him and grasping his hand. "What is it, Mr. Phillips?"

"I was thinking," said Mr. Phillips, suffering himself to be led slowly back; "I was thinking whether that law-suit of Trowbridge's, in which I am counsel, wouldn't damage your chance of an election. Hadn't you better withdraw it? You know such matters are apt to run into politics."

"I can't withdraw it," answered Mr. Filer. "I should lose Trowbridge's influence if I did."

"Trowbridge is a federal."

"Yes, but he will work for me and vote for me."

"How do you know that?"

"I wish you wouldn't ask me."

"Very well, Filer. I'm trying to consult your interest and that of the party. I don't wish to be thought indifferent to my professional duties, but I'm afraid here's a conflict of duties. I am afraid that little personal things will be found flying in the face of all-absorbing national ones. It is not that I care about you, Filer, in yourself considered, but I have associated you with a principle. I see that you think my apprehensions are foolish, and I am disposed to think so too. Never mind, good-bye."

"Wait, Brother Phillips," said Mr. Filer with a very anxious expression of countenance. "Don't be hasty. I see what you would be at. You look at the concrete only as the—a—embodiment of the *abstract*. It is only as being such an embodiment that it has any im-

portance at all in your estimation. The concrete has with you a relative importance. I am in this instance a humble representative of the—a—concrete, and have a certain relative value, eh?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Mr. Phillips impatiently; "but it's not worth speaking of; I find that we don't see things alike. I dare say your way is the best, and I beg you to drop the subject."

"That's what I never will do," exclaimed Mr. Filer, clutching at one of Mr. Phillips's coat buttons. "I know your great mental superiority over me, and the vast obligations that you are laying me under. I'm not an ingrate, Brother Phillips. I'm willing to sacrifice myself. I'll entertain any suggestion that comes from you."

"Then I advise you," answered Mr. Phillips, in a lofty manner that made a very odd contrast to the abject one of the solicitous candidate, "to get this exciting cause out of the way or it will ruin us. We can't stand the pressure of it. A few votes will turn the scale. Let the responsibility rest with the neighbors of the contending parties. Let us throw a fire brand into the camp of the enemy. Let us arbitrate the case, Filer."

Mr. Filer lifted his feet so high that it did not seem possible he could ever put them down. But he did, and planted them on the floor again without an echo.

"Phillips," he cried; "you are my better angel. It's the very thing to do. You are counsel for the society—I for plaintiff. When the court sits on Tuesday we'll have an entry made in the docket that the case is submitted to arbitration, under rule of court. Capital! Who shall be the arbitrators? We must have good, fair—a—honest men you know, Brother Phillips. They must be honest, or the deacon would raise the devil! Name the men and see if we can agree. What I say I'll stand by—if—it—crushes me," he added with a glow of conscious integrity.

"No, no," said Mr. Phillips. "As I told you, I'm looking at the general, not at the particular. You

shall name the men, and, unless there are serious objections to them, I will accept them."

"Give me your hand, Brother Phillips; an honest man's hand to shake is refreshing."

"Name your men," said Mr. Phillips, extricating his hand as soon as possible from the other's grasp.

"Rufus," said Mr. Filer, turning to the chattel, "I'm dreadfully agitated. I can't think of anything consecutively. Do you think you're sober enough to act for me?"

"I think so," said Mr. Swift with cheerful confidence.

"Well then, go ahead. You have just come from that neighborhood and know the men; not that you are to take advantage of that circumstance, do you hear? We want unbiassed, indifferent men. I suppose we don't differ about that, Brother Phillips? Now I ask you, Rufus, to name three such men—go slow—one at a time, Rufus."

"I would name Mr. John Barker," said Mr. Swift.

"What do you say to him, Brother Phillips?" asked Mr. Filer.

"I don't think I could consent to have him," answered Mr. Phillips.

"What ails him?"

"Well, in the first place he's a crazy man, or something very like it. Then he is a deadly enemy to the denomination that I have the honor to represent in this case; and in the third place he is hostile, I am told, to his son-in-law, Everett, one of our deacons and principal pillars in the church." Mr. Filer had swallowed the bait and the hook with it. He was determined now to have Mr. Barker for one of the board at all hazard.

"Really, Brother Phillips," he remonstrated in his most endearing whine; "really now, I don't think your objections are tenable. I know Mr. Barker very well. He is a little whimsical perhaps in some of his notions, but I don't think, except in his management of his own affairs, that he is very a—to state the case fairly—as you may say, wild. I consider him, in short,



a sensible, witty, eccentric old gentleman. As to his judgment touching other men's matters, I regard him sound. Now as to your second objection, he can't be more adverse to that denomination of Christians than you are sir; and then the fact that you are on that side will tend to neutralize him. Furthermore, as to the third and last objection raised by you, perhaps the old gentleman *may* be a little downright with Deacon Everett. Very likely he is; I dare say the deacon may sometimes say things to aggravate his feelings. We are none of us perfect, and the old gentleman may *break out*, you know. But then the deacon married Mr. Barker's daughter. I really think you are over-nice in this matter. Come, I'll tell you what I'll do; if you'll let Mr. Barker stand, you shall name the second and Rufus shall name the third. I don't even ask to name one of them. That shows my disinterestedness. What say you?"

"I am willing to consent to anything that will advance the public interest," said Mr. Phillips. "Have it your own way, Filer, you always do. Everybody does with me for that matter. I never could say no to anybody. Yes, let it be so. I name Squire Pickett. Come, Swift, finish up the job and let me be on the way home. It's a long road."

"I name Mr. Elnathan Garrett," said Mr. Swift.

"He signed the petition circulated by your rascally deacon against the parson, Filer," said Mr. Phillips. "But I stick to the agreement. You see to the entry of these three names in the docket next Tuesday. Good day," and Mr. Phillips bowed and left the owner and the chattel chuckling over their superior generalship.

"There, Rufus, we've done it! Now you may get as drunk as you please, and here's five dollars to buy rum with. Get very drunk, Rufus; I think it sharpens your wits."

When the chattel plodded off, he left his owner with both arms outstretched, apparently reaching for something on the borders of the indefinite.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE SUSPENSION.

THE male members of our church were beginning to straggle into the village to attend the meeting, in obedience to the warning, when Mr. Phillips, driving down the county road at a steady rate, met my father and me just at the point where the cross-road from the village comes in. They both pulled up their horses at the same time.

"I reined up just to say one word," said Mr. Phillips. "I don't want to excite suspicion by calling on Stanyan this afternoon; I see you Hebrews are beginning to assemble. Tell the parson that I have seen Filer and arranged with him to arbitrate the suit about the parsonage."

"Who are the men?"

"Mr. Barker, Squire Pickett and Mr. Garrett."

"It might be worse."

"It couldn't be better, deacon. Do your duty and it will come out right. Tell the parson what the news is, and keep it as secret as death until after the entry is made in the docket. If Trowbridge should find out what the arrangement is before that time he'd break it up."

"I'll keep it fast enough."

"Yes, yes, I know that," said Mr. Phillips. "One other thing. Don't trust that matter to come to a vote this evening, unless you are really sure of the result. Don't rely too much on the parson; he's too gentle. Somebody must strike heavy blows. Somebody must give Trowbridge a sore head. You can do that, deacon. Utter one of David's war-cries and fall upon him. The chariots and horses are what you want. You have prayed over this sinner long enough. Cast him into outer darkness, Everett; you can do it."

"I have been thinking that I should let the dogs loose on him to-night," said my father.

"If you think they can tear him, do so by all means. Good-bye," and Mr. Phillips drove on.

I was sitting on my father's left hand and he held the reins. He pulled them in rigidly, straightened himself up, turned his face round and said :

"Phillips is right. Dr. Stanyan is too gentle. I have submitted to his tactics too long. I'm going to rebel now. If I get Trowbridge in these hands," he continued, bringing his fists down upon his knees as if they had been a complicated bear-trap, "*if I do*, I shall hurt him."

He did not say another word until we entered the meeting house. My father walked up the middle aisle and took his seat in his own pew. I retired to my favorite retreat in the gallery. Scarcely had I seated myself when the church members began to throng in. They might have been dead people coming to revisit their old haunts, so voiceless were they, such a gleam was in their eyes, as if the focus were fixed for the contemplation of things that could not be made objective to the senses. The very echoes in the house might have been whispers in the belfry, so distant did they sound. It seemed to me an age before Dr. Stanyan came in, walked up to the deacon's seat, and took his place in the great chair behind it, as he used to do on Communion Sundays. His look and manner were much the same as usual, except that the scholarly paleness had invaded the crimson of his cheek, and his lips were a little more firmly closed than they were wont to be, but they had not a single curve or tinge of scorn in them. After him came Deacon Trowbridge. He appeared to fill the whole aisle as he sailed up toward his pew, so that a silver sixpence could hardly have been thrust between the pew doors and his waistcoat. As he seated himself he gave utterance to a sort of proprietary cough, and looked about him with the air of a man who owned, by hereditary right, whatever his eye rested on, and was the high priest of all the mysteries represented by the spiritual machinery around him; deacon, seat, pulpit, crimson cushions, big Bible, sound-

ing board and the assembly of the saints—all were his by divine pre-emption running back to the days of "Supplicia."

After a suitable delay Dr. Stanyan, as the presiding officer of the meeting, called the church to order. I had noticed that before this my father was busily turning over a paper that he held in his hand, and absorbed in its contents. As soon as he heard the call for bringing forward the business of the meeting he arose and addressed the church, as nearly as I can report him, in these words:

"Mr. Chairman and Brethren: I have been a silent witness for years of the behavior of Brother Trowbridge toward our beloved pastor; I have watched in the church and outside of it, the doublings of a wicked purpose in its pursuit of an innocent victim. I have prayed, I have remonstrated in vain; I have worn myself out at last and can no longer keep back what is in my heart. It would be sinful in me to attempt it. All the necessary steps provided by the Master have been taken to bring Brother Trowbridge to a sense of his relations with us, but to no purpose. The real motives of the offender lie too deep to be reached by such probes. Personal hatred is one motive, but below that is avarice. Why is it that the hand of every man in this church is turned against his brother? Why is it that we are at this moment contending in civil courts for rights so long enjoyed and so long held sacred? Why are we pointed at as a scandal and reproach to all the other churches of Christ? It is because Ananias would keep back the price of the land. It is because Ahab would rob us of our vineyard. I have in my hands," he said, rustling the petition so industriously circulated by Deacon Trowbridge, "a paper maligning the character of Dr. Stanyan. It is a web of falsehoods cunningly woven, and fastened to the very door posts of this house to catch the unwary. The attack made upon Dr. Stanyan is aimed at the church. Every blow is a stab at the heart of every member of this church. This enemy seeks to take

from us the inheritance that his grandfather left us. He would cast us out of the house that shelters us. He has made many of you parties to this infamy. You have acted unwittingly. I call upon you here in this sacred place to undo what you have done, and that you may act with your eyes open I offer the following resolution:

"Whereas, our brother, Deacon Zalmon Trowbridge, has long sought and now seeks to take away, by slanderous accusations against our pastor, the Rev. Dr. John Stanyan, the property left to our society by the Last Will and Testament of Deacon Juba Trowbridge, it is resolved that this church holds such conduct of Deacon Zalmon Trowbridge to be blameworthy and sinful, and does hereby suspend him from communion and fellowship until the further action of this church."

The shell so suddenly dropped into this assembly of apparitions broke the charm and galvanized them into real life. Two or three of the patriarchs stood up, and before my father had spoken two sentences Deacon Trowbridge twitched his spectacles from his nose, pushed open the pew door with his cane, stepped out into the aisle and stood facing his accuser, at first with an expression of tranquil wonder, and afterward with a pale cheek and white lips. Every word went home to him, and he could not have failed to see his condemnation written on the hard features of the auditors. When my father sat down, the accused, without so much as looking at the presiding officer, began to reply to the assailant in a very high key.

"The speaker will address himself to the chair," said Dr. Stanyan in a commanding tone. "The courtesies due to this presence cannot be overlooked."

"I beg pardon, sir," said the deacon. "In the excitement of the moment I forgot myself."

"Go on, sir," said Dr. Stanyan. Deacon Zalmon's thoughts had gone a wool-gathering and it was some time before he could call them home. At last he began again.

"Mr. Chairman and Brethren: I have not been in

the habit of standing up here or elsewhere to defend myself. The steps that I have taken in the matter alluded to in such unfeeling terms, were taken with an eye single to the glory of God and the welfare of this church. I have done nothing hastily or maliciously. I have not been actuated by a desire of filthy lucre. These charges are calumnious and false. A lying spirit is in the mouth of him who made them. It is true I have brought a suit to recover forfeited property. If I can prove what I have alleged in my declaration I shall so recover it. When I do I will restore it as soon as the conditions of the grant are again complied with. If the present incumbent of the pulpit can be removed, and his place filled by a fit successor, I will instantly withdraw the action. But this change I demand, and I will have it. I will have a revival preacher; a man instant in season and out of season; a man full of the Holy Ghost. My family have too great a stake in this church; they have offered up too much incense on its altar, to be so lightly thrust aside. I know I have enemies here. I will fight against them and discomfit them—yea, in the name of the Lord will I destroy them."

Scarcely had he sat down when my father was on his feet again. Except for the absence of sword and buckler (bronzed as he was by exposure to the sun and with a certain salient defiance in his attitude and bearing) he might have been Joab preparing to administer summary justice to Absalom in spite of the commands of David. The Christian was wholly merged in the Hebrew. His reply was full of lofty denunciations and his illustrations were as paradoxical as those of Ezekiel. I never felt so proud of him in my life. When he came to that part of Deacon Trowbridge's speech which threatened the dismissal of Dr. Stanyan, he spoke of the prophets of Baal as if he would like to have them all in his clutches at once and dash them to atoms.

"And this man will sacrifice upon the altar of the church," he broke out at length "So once did Cain.

But the wrath of God quenched the flames that he had kindled and only the smoke thereof ascended to Heaven."

At this home-thrust it seemed to me that Deacon Zalmon's face had melted the rims of his spectacles and that they were trickling down upon his chin. My father spoke at considerable length, and reveled in an ecstasy of metaphor, ranging over the Hebrew writings from Genesis to Malachi.

Other rural orators followed with various shades of elucidation from stubble-field, grist-mill and blacksmith shop, some counseling peace and brotherly love, but nearly all aiming their shafts at Deacon Trowbridge. Finally Oliver Bramble, who had sat hunched up like a porcupine, near the door, with his head down listening to what was said, unrolled himself, rose as nearly erect as he could, and spoke as follows :

"Mr. Chairman and Brethren :—I shook off in my kitchen a few remarks this afternoon on paper techin' th' subject under discussion, but fin'ly thought I wouldn't read 'em, but trust tu th' movin of the speret. I'm sech a young un in grace that I can't dew nothin' but disfigger my face a cryin' and suckin' my thumbs ; but I've got a soul ter be saved, sech as 'tis. Taint ez big ez Deacon Zalmon's, but that's all th' more reason why it orter have a chance ter grow. It wants all th' slewces open, an' th' hull channel unobstructed, an' then 't'll be stunted. My past life's like the roots of an old pear tree, ez hain't got no fibres on 'em. I need th' savin' influences of a good church, an' even then my leaves will look yaller and my fruit 'll be pimpin. Neow a church ez is a fightin ain't a prayin, an' nothin short o' prayin' ken keep th' winkum eout of me. It's got inter th' circulation, an' a drop on it goes right threw me like quicksilver. In fact, it's ben 'bout th' only circulatin' medium ez I ever done business on. Neow I've sarched the Scripters, an' not findin anythin in the New Testament as I thought had partickler reference to Deacon Zalmon, I nat'rally turned tu th' Old. I've found suthin' ez I think hits his case. When

Pharaoh kep a holdin on ter Moses in spite of th' frogs an' th' lice, an' th' locusts, an' was so onreasonable ez tew insist on his makin' bricks fer the pyramids eout of nothin, it became necessary for Moses tew tackle onto Pharaoh's fust-born. That was more'n th' hard hearted critter cud stan' an' he fin'ly hed tu own beat. Neow th' deacon's tried all th' other plegs on us, to no avail; an' he's a castin' misbeholdin' eyes on *our* fust-born. So ef yew'll allow ez poor a critter ez I be ter express an opinion, I recommend that we let th' deacon go afore he lets his last pleg loose on us."

The manner as well as the matter of his speech set me off into a fit of giggling that I was obliged to smother, for it attracted considerable attention. It seemed all the worse from the fact that there was not a smile upon any other face in the house, unless the twinkle in Dr. Stanyan's eye might pass for one.

The question was then taken on the resolution, and Deacon Trowbridge was suspended from communion and fellowship by a vote of more than two-thirds of the members present. He immediately arose, left the pew, slammed the door after him, and strode down the aisle in the most approved manner of an Apostle shaking off the dust of his feet.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### ECHOES.

ELATED with the result of the vote in the church-meeting I ran out of the house and hastened to communicate the intelligence to Marcella, whom I had not visited since my return from the scene of my recent scholastic triumph. I had been trying all this while to find an occasion to spur me up to make this visit, and had sat brooding and lingering in a hazy perspective of procrastination. Besides was I not a rejected suitor? I had been encouraged by Marcella to persevere in the pursuit of knowledge in a tone how unlike the passion-



ate interest of love ! Still my heart was chained to this hope, and, like a tree that had been stricken by lightning, remained rooted to the spot where it grew.

Now I had a motive to visit Marcella and improved it. Almost breathless I ran toward the parsonage sharing in anticipation the joy I was to impart. Marcella met me at the door. A glance at my face gathered all she wanted to know before I could speak. A smile of triumphant enthusiasm told me how happy I had made her.

"Oh, Frank, is it really so ?" She took my hand and pulled rather than led me across the entry, through the sitting-room into the study. She closed the door behind her and seated me in her father's great arm-chair, face to face with the open page of the Iliad that records the tenderness of Andromache and the chivalry of Hector. But what were the glories of art to me at that moment ? Two or three times she walked across the room, then she came and stood in front of me.

"Was the vote large, Frank ?"

"Nearly unanimous."

"Something told me it would be so. But why have you stayed away so long ? Have I done anything to deserve it ?"

I faltered out some excuse, I know not what. I would rather have faced another college examination than answer these questions.

"So you won the valedictory ?" she said at length, with a proud look. "I knew you would."

"How could I help it ? Did you not command me ?"

Her head drooped a little ; a faint flush came into her cheek.

"You would have done it all the same without that," she said.

"Oh, Marcie, how little do you know me after so many years !"

"Do you mean to have me believe that you have thought of me, Frank ? I may have been allowed to have

a peep at you from the outer circle, but other eyes shone nearer, brighter. Tell me whose? I suppose I may know that?"

This was more than I could endure. What could the heart be made of that could so trifle with mine!

The demon of jealousy prompted me. With a swelling heart and choking voice I told her the confession that William had made me under the maple by the brook. With a bitterness that nothing but my agony could have engendered I taunted her with her love for another as a sin against me. She heard me to the end without remonstrance, and then replied:

"Frank, do you remember what you said to me under the great pine tree in the August noon? Do you remember your questionings about William Dart, and my promise?"

"You might as well ask me, Marcella, if I am conscious of my own existence."

"Well, Frank, I am ready to answer you now. I have never in my life concealed anything from you that I thought you ought to know. You must give me an honest hearing without interruption, and you are to put no construction upon what I am about to say other than the words themselves import. If I wound you, you are not to complain. When I have finished my story you may deal as plainly with me as you like. Nothing suits me better than plain dealing. You know that."

"I accept the narrative under the conditions imposed, Marcella. I will do my best to obey you. Pray go on."

"You rightly divined what had passed between William and me. That morning he had offered me his hand. I had long expected that it must come to that, and had tried to prepare myself for it. I was determined not to put off the interview. I had decided what answer I would make, but I will be honest with you, Frank; I did not know where I was drifting, or what I should ultimately do. You must be aware that

William is a fascinating person and calculated to make an impression upon any young woman with whom he is brought in contact. He is not only handsome and witty, but he has the untaught graces of manner that grow out of a flexible temperament, and a ready eloquence of speech that goes decidedly to the heart. You are to bear in mind, also, that he has been under my father's roof ever since I was a little child, and that I have looked up to him for years as older and more mature than the other members of the school. Something of the charm of romance had also attached itself to his southern home and associations as he had pictured them to my imagination. So we met, and he made his declaration of love to me with passionate fervor. I will confess to you that my heart wavered, but my answer was firm. I rejected him without leaving open a single avenue of hope to him. Had I been assured of his honor, the answer would have been different. At that time his attentions to Charlotte had not been much noticed by others, but to me they were obvious enough to excite suspicion; I might as well say as to awaken a jealousy that I was ashamed to acknowledge even to myself. I thought he was trifling with both Charlotte and me, and my pride was hurt, and I would have died after submitting to the most ingenious tortures before I would have married him. I have told you that in my refusal I had left no avenue open to him. Oh, Frank, I did leave one open to myself! If he should prove true to me, if I found that I could take him at his word, that he really did love me, what recantations would I not have made! Then came your proposal. Do you call to mind my tears? I loved you, Frank, in the old child's way. I meant to deal plainly with you, and I think I did. Anything relating to you was too sacred for me to trifle with. Don't be angry with me. It had never come to my mind that you could out-grow the associations of my school days. I felt no more shame in kissing you than in kissing Charlotte. I know this piques you. It ought not, for you are a head taller now. William

had the tact to soon find out that I was jealous of Charlotte. From that moment, so far as I was then aware, he devoted himself exclusively to me. He protested and persisted, until he made me believe that he devotedly loved me. I must own that during this period I had no cause to complain of any want of attention. He was by my side whenever he could be, and that was a good share of the time. Still I had not the confidence in him that I reposed in you. But I did make a promise to him—a conditional promise, that if I found him truly mine after having put him to the proof for the entire term of the senior year, I would at the end of that time, with my father's consent, plight myself to him as his future wife. Such was the state of affairs between us when he left me to begin that year. We kept up a constant correspondence for some months. I had said nothing about this partial engagement to my father, but had kept the secret in my own bosom. I durst not tell him lest he might interdict all further communication between William and me. All this while I was tortured with many a pang of conscience, and could hardly look my poor father in the face. I had stolen something from him and kept looking about for a safe place in which to hide it. It is true the engagement was only provisional, but I knew that my feelings were more and more complicated with it every day, and that I was preparing a net in which either his parental authority or my own freedom of will might be inextricably entangled. This was the first great secret that I had ever kept from him, and I often awoke at midnight with the startled consciousness that I had committed some horrible crime. To make everything worse, he was constantly watching me. Let me rather say it was his love that was watching me. Had it been a mean and jealous individuality that thus stood guard over my thoughts and actions, I could have met it with a rebellious spirit. But who can rebel against a superintending love? Yet I was not without an antidote. In the ordinary conditions of life I could hardly be called a romantic girl,

but during these brief months—brief and long—my imagination took marvellous excursions. I flew upon the wings of the wind, and it blew from all quarters of the heavens. It kept changing and whirling and whirling, now into the clouds, now into the deserts, and again into an unfathomable sea; I lived up to the ideals of classic fable; I was inspired with the madness of the Sybil, the blind worship of Ione.

“You have heard of a ship dragging her anchors. For eighteen years I had been anchored to my home—such a home! You know what it is. When I was six years old my mother died. I remember the beauty of her face. Her force and sweetness, which, alas, I fear I have not inherited, are left to me only in the shape of an avenging ghost. Then my dear aunt Mary, my father’s sister, took me in charge until I was almost a woman, and did what she could while she lived to subdue a random-thoughted girl and keep her in the right way. Well, this home, such as it was and is, Frank, there have been times when I have torn myself from its past, its present, its future, and followed William to the ends of the world. Don’t speak, Frank. Don’t tell me what you think of me. I have put a spell upon your tongue. You cannot break it. Let me go on again. Such was the state of affairs when one evening Charlotte Carew came here in a condition of unwonted excitement, and begged me to take a walk with her. Her face was aglow with something that had happened to her, or that she had been thinking of, or anticipating. It was impossible for me to divine what had disturbed her so. ‘I want to take a walk,’ said she; ‘Marcella, I want to walk a million miles.’ Her impetuosity was suited to my mood. ‘So do I,’ I said, and we set forth. We went to the ledge on the brink of the lake. When we reached it the moon was coming up over The Ridge, darting innumerable arrows of light into the water; no, it was not water—it was fire. We talked about many things. ‘Come with me,’ said Charlotte. She caught my arm and dragged me to the edge of the rock that hangs over the pool. ‘There,’

she said, pointing down into the depths that lay in impenetrable shadow, contrasting so strongly with the more remote surface, 'if I ever get so tired of life that I can't abide it another minute, I shall drop it just there.' We went back to the ledge, she all the while running on in a wild, desultory way, like a fire in the woods. We talked a long while. Suddenly she turned her eyes full upon me and said, 'Marcella, do you love William Dart?' I responded by a shrill laugh, that the pines and hemlocks took up and sent to the deepest caverns of the rocks. 'How can you be such a little fool?' said I. 'I am not such a fool,' replied Charlotte. 'I only asked you; I had no thought you loved him. It was a preface to what I was going to say. I must say it to somebody. I love him; I have been jealous of you sometimes, but I am getting over that, or I should not choose you for my confidant. I am so in love with him, Marcella, that I am ready to die for him.' 'Has he ever told you that he loves you?' I asked. 'I am not going to tell you that,' said she. 'I have a right to say that I am gone mad for him. If he had told me anything it would only be something of his that he had lent me, and I would have no right to give it away to any one else. I don't care who knows it, except my father. If he knew it I fear it would break his heart.'

"Then she went on and gave me a history of her passion for *my lover* that made my ears tingle. When she had finished I only said, 'I am cold; come, Charlotte, let's go home.' 'I had expected some sympathy from you,' cried she angrily. 'I might have remembered what a cross prude you are. I wish cousin Frank would marry you and have done with it. Come along.' We went back in moody silence. I cannot recall a word that was spoken by either of us after that until we parted at Dr. Carew's gate. I went home, crawled to my room, and tried to sleep. I might as well have tried to stop breathing. In the morning I wrote a letter to William, in which I told him what Charlotte had confided to me, and asked for the explanation which she had refused to

give. He answered by the next post asseverating that he had given Charlotte no occasion to entertain such sentiments toward him, and that his heart was irrevocably mine. I believed him and went on indulging my delusions. I wrote him several letters after that, in which I poured out my whole soul to him, and received answers of a most satisfactory character.

"One Saturday afternoon just before you and William came home from Yale, at the close of the last term, as I went across the common to the Post Office to fetch the mail, I saw Charlotte walking toward her father's house, so absorbed in the contents of a letter she was reading that she evidently did not see me until I peeped under the shadow of her bonnet and caught the smile of exultation that lit up her face. She blushed crimson and hid the letter in her bosom. I appeared not to notice her embarrassment, made a passing observation and walked on. As soon as I had received our quota of letters (one of them was from William) I again emerged upon the common and saw Charlotte at a distance walking slowly—her head bent forward, devouring, as I supposed, the contents of the same letter. My suspicions were aroused, and I followed her toward Dr. Carew's gate. When I had approached near enough to her I called out 'Charlotte,' and saw the quick motion of her hand as she again hid the letter. She turned around and walked rapidly toward me. When she came up to me her eyes were brimming over with tears.

"'What is the matter, Charlotte; does the post bring bad news?' I asked.

"I could see her face brighten with relief at the opportunity I had given her.

"'Yes, Marcella, my cousin Mary Carew is sick. You remember she came from Hartford to visit me last summer. I must go to her at once—that is if my father will let me.'

"'What ails her?'

"'Some slow fever—typhus or something like it.'

"'It must be contagious. I do not think your father will consent to your going.

"Perhaps not. I can soon find out that."

"It was very good acting, but my suspicions made me alert. We had reached the point where our ways diverged when I said :

"You look excited and disturbed, Charlotte; a little fresh air will do you good. Let us walk further."

"Yes ; where shall we go ?"

"What do you say to Bethesda ?"

"This was in allusion to a little spring behind her father's house that had mineral properties, which Dr. Carew had analyzed and found worthy of the name he had given it.

"Just the thing, Marcie. We need not go through the gate, it is too tiresome. Let us go north of the house and jump over the wall."

"I assented, and so we went up the county road until we were opposite the spring. If there was one thing that Charlotte excelled in more than another it was the climbing of fences. In this, as her father used to say, she was equal to two boys. As her custom was she took the lead on this occasion, and, when she had surmounted the wall, jumped from it like a squirrel into the tall meadow grass and then started and ran toward the spring without looking behind her. I followed with less agility. As my feet touched the ground I reached out my hand to keep myself from falling, and caught the letter which Charlotte had lost in jumping from the wall. While she was running from me through the unmown grass I glanced at the address, saw that it was in William's handwriting, and in my turn instantly hid it as Charlotte had done. When I came up to her she was seated on a rustic bench beneath a white-ash tree large enough to shade a regiment of soldiers, and dabbling with both her hands in the spring that bubbled up beneath her feet. She was entirely herself now.

"How you do mope along, Marcella," she said. "I am rested already and you seem tired. Look at the bubbles. I have often thought that if I was as sure of being happy in the next world as that fountain seems to be in this, I would like to try it at once. What a



joyous face and what sparkling eyes! *That* is as near immortality as anything can be in this world.'

"Do you think it has an individual existence, Charlotte? Do you think it really enjoys itself?'

"I am sure I don't know why it should be a hypocrite. It has nobody to deceive. It has only to babble and babble, and reflect what it sees. That is what a poet does, and a poet, so father says, does not act by himself, he is acted upon. He speaks, he does not know why, as a baby cries, as a bird sings, as a drop of dew glistens, as a star twinkles, as a poor lonesome little woman creeps and creeps towards the man that masters her wilfulness by his will.'

"When Charlotte was fairly started on such a race nobody could stop her prattle, and she outdid the Bethesda in natural sprightliness and determined vitality. I said little. The letter—how bitterly did the honest fountain accuse me—the letter was burning in my bosom. Yet I did the best I could and hid my dissimulation under the specious fig-leaves of a shame that was consuming me. Charlotte's vivacity spent itself at last, and then we sought our homes. I went to my room and locked the door. I might as well own the truth; although I was stung, this was only an incentive to spur me on to resolve my agonizing doubts. I I clutched the letter from its hiding-place with such fierceness that I tore it in half before I could open it. It confirmed my worst fears. It was a full confession of William's love for Charlotte, with many allusions to its first beginnings and later developments that I did not understand, but which all tended to the same result. I can only recall the language of the postscript: 'when I return to you next week we will perfect our plan of escape before it is too late. Be wary, Charlotte, confide in no one; least of all, Marcella. Trust only in me.' I kept this letter till late in the evening, then stole softly down stairs, ran across the common, threw it over the gate into Dr. Carew's doorway, came back, and opened my letter from William, full of the most extravagant protestations of love. Oh,

Frank, the discovery of such treachery was agony. How I had believed in him! How I had loved him! I knew that I had read my doom. The table reeled before my eyes, the wall of the room went spinning round me. When I came to myself my father was standing over me and trying to call me back to conscious life. The very sight of his manly, ruddy face restored me.

"What is the matter, Marcie? What has brought you to this pitiable condition?" he asked.

"What could a guilty child conceal from such a father? 'I have sinned. I have sinned,' I cried. He took my hand, he bent over me, he murmured soothingly, I do not remember what. You do not know my father yet. The grandeur of his soul will never find room to expand itself in this world. Had I fallen from the highest height to the lowest depth he would have spoken, he would have caressed me just as he did. He took me on his knee as he used to do when I was six years old, and fondled and petted me a few moments before he trusted himself to speak connectedly. Then he put his hands one on each side of my forehead and turned my face toward him. 'Look at me, Marcella,' he said. 'What have you been doing that you need be ashamed of? If it is very heavy you will want broader shoulders than yours to carry it. Put the burden on mine.' I told him the whole story. He listened at first with astonishment and then with a sympathetic interest as delicate as a woman's. 'Is that all, Marcella?' he said when I had completed my narrative. 'Is that all? I thought it must have been something dreadful.' He tossed me from his knees as if I had been a ball. 'Get your bonnet and cloak and come along with me,' he said. We sallied out. He gave me his arm and pulled me on at a rapid pace; I could not at first tell in what direction, so confused and wild was I with the shock that had prostrated me. I did not come to myself, nor did he speak, until he stopped in front of your father's house. A light glimmered in your window and I saw your mother sitting by the table reading.

"'Marcie,' said he, 'why don't you speak? What makes you shiver so? Are you cold?'

"'I am waiting for you to speak,' I replied.

"'Does the cool air steady your nerves? Are you strong now? Shall I tell you what I was thinking about, Marcie? That woman at the window is fit to be the mother of Marcellus. She is the mother of as good a son as ever Roman matron brought into the world. She is the mother of Frank Everett, and he loves you as he does his own soul. You don't want to break my heart, do you, Marcie? You don't want to send me to the grave before my time, do you, child?'

"'No, father.'

"'I think Frank has said something to you about that, hasn't he?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"'And you could not make up your mind to love him; you preferred Dart?'

"'I said nothing. He waited a while and went on. 'Marcie, I am not going to say anything harsh to you. If you can't love Frank, I have nothing to say in his behalf. But one thing you *must* do, darling; you must give up Dart.'

"'I have given him up absolutely, forever.'

"'And you must never engage yourself to any one without my consent.'

"'I never will,' I replied.

"'Well, then, kiss me, Marcie. Come home now and say no more about it.'

"And nothing more passed between us on the subject from that moment to this, except that he showed me the next morning a letter which he had written to William, informing him that certain changes in our domestic affairs made it impossible for us any longer to consider him an inmate of our family.

"On his return to the village William took up his abode with Deacon Trowbridge. Once he has been here to superintend the removal of his books and other articles of personal property, and twice he has called requesting an interview with me. At first I refused to

see him. Yesterday he came a second time and I consented. I will tell you how it fell out as nearly as I can. He was seated on the sofa reading when I came into the parlor. He rose and advanced toward me with a surprised and injured look that certainly passed with me as current coin. He extended his hand. I did not refuse to take it, but when he would have lifted it to his lips, I drew it scornfully from him. If he had been the most innocent being in the world he could not have looked more astonished.

"'Oh, Marcella,' he said, 'what do you mean? what can have happened to you?'

"'We simple girls of the North,' I replied, 'are loyal to our word and honor. We hold others up to the same rule. You promised to love me—only me. On this condition I gave you what I had to give—my love—my faith. I thought I had yours in return. How many hearts have you to bestow, William? As this is the last time I expect ever to see you, I will not let you go undecieved. I have read your letter to Charlotte. We part on fair terms, William, and forever.' I extended my hand. He rushed to me with a wild earnestness of look and gesture, as if he would have clasped me in his arms in spite of my remonstrance, even while he supplicated my forgiveness. I retreated to the remotest corner of the room and swayed myself aside so as to avoid the contamination of his touch.

"'Leave me,' I cried.

"'I will not leave you,' he replied fiercely. 'I will not leave you without an explanation. Which letter have you seen?'

"'How many have you written to her then? How many tokens has she in her hands to prove the depth and baseness of your treachery?'

"'Still he persisted.

"'Which letter, which? I can explain everything. You are bringing ruin upon yourself and me. Oh, Marcella, do not cast me off without hearing my defence.'

"I gave him the contents of the letter as nearly as I could recall them. He listened even to the end with

perfect self-possession. I saw that he was counting on his power over me and confidently expected to master my resolution.

"‘You talk like a child, Marcella. My affections were concentrated upon you; but no man can control his fancies; they are like the stars, they light up every object that they shine upon. Besides, fancies are reciprocal.’

"He saw he had gone too far; suddenly he changed his voice and manner and said penitently: ‘I have done you a great wrong. I confess it. You alone are the object of my love, my adoration. Tell me how I can atone for what I have done. Forgive me, oh, forgive me, and I will never see Charlotte again.’

"He caught hold of my hand; I wrung it from his grasp, and cried out madly :

"‘You think I am too weak to resist your sophistries, that I will forgive your perjuries. Once for all, understand me. You will never deceive me again. If I could find in my heart one fibre that clings to you I would pluck it out by the roots. Leave me,’ I continued, gliding from him and stepping toward the study door ; ‘leave me or I will summon my father to my assistance.’ He saw that I was ready to carry out my threat, bowed solemnly and withdrew.

"This is the story of my intimacy with William Dart, from its beginning to our final separation. You must leave me now, Frank; I am worn out with sleeplessness, and my heart is stung with disappointment and mortification. We can now, if you do not despise me for what I have done, stand upon our old footing and maintain it during our joint lives. Whatever may befall, we can and must be more than ever before disinterested and faithful depositories of each other’s confidences. In the best sense we can love and be loved. Beyond your welfare and that of my father I have nothing to forecast. You have a future full of flattering anticipations. Life will open high arched vistas to you—for me only the narrow and shadowy pathway to the grave. Come and see me often, Frank, it comforts me

to be reassured that I have a friend who will never betray me."

I put my arm about her neck, drew her toward me and kissed her forehead. She returned my caresses as a child might.

"I will not leave you, Marcella," I said, "without some better understanding of my relations with you. You speak of my future. What future can I have that is not inseparably linked with yours? If you still labor under the delusion that I am a boy, disabuse yourself of it. I will have no future that I do not take at your hands—without you life would be insupportable. You can make the darkness light, and the rough places smooth. None—none but you. If I am to have a destiny you shall shape it; if I am to wear a laurel, you shall wreath it."

She looked at me with wondering eyes. I had misinterpreted her, and she let me know it by a glance.

"Do you imagine I am so weak and immature, Frank, as to take you at your word? Do you think I am so unschooled in the ways of the world as to dream that you, in the freshness of youth, can take up a faded wreath and crown yourself with it? Do you think I am such a fool as not to know that all too soon for my happiness you would awaken to a new sense of what you might have done? Nay, let me vindicate myself. Do you hold me in such light regard as to deem me capable of throwing off in a moment the burden of the weary, weary past, and substituting for it something—better indeed, but so different? Frank, it is impossible. William Dart and I have parted company, and to the end of our lives must follow different ways, yet if you are building up any hopes upon that, abandon them at once. We will invert the old order of our lives. You shall be the teacher, I the pupil. You shall instruct me how to forget the past. I will learn of you how to practice the patience that I have tried to teach you. Leave me now, but come again to-morrow."

I obeyed and left her alone. As I was going out I

saw Dr. Stanyan at the gate. He opened it, waited for me to pass out, and then shut it after me.

"Where are you going, Frank?"

"Home, sir,"

"Come with me into the chaise."

The doctor's handsome black horse stood unfastened, playfully pawing the ground in front of the house. So we got in and he drove off. When he had anything serious on his mind he had a dreadful way of being reticent. I was under the old subserviency, and I waited for him to speak. After we had driven a little way, he turned about, fixed his eyes upon me, and said:

"You have been talking with Marcie. What did you say to her—what did she say to you? Tell me all about it."

I recounted everything that had passed between us. When I had finished he said:

"I do not know how to advise you, Frank. If I could have my way, you should have yours. But I cannot compel Marcella to choose. But one thing I can and will do; I will restrain her from making a bad choice. She was not quite so open with me as I would have liked in this matter of Dart. But she made amends for it afterward, and I have her promise. I can rely upon that. This child has been a great comfort to me. I have lived for her. I could give her to you and still keep her. Frank, do you really and truly love her? Would you cling to her if she were hopelessly sick? If she died, would you cherish her memory as a living presence?"

"With me love is an immortal personality," I replied.

Dr. Stanyan's eyes filled with tears.

"That is the love I had for Marcie's mother. I cherish it yet. We are parted only in seeming. A few more doublings of the crooked, dusty road, and I shall see her in the distance and fly to overtake her. Then we shall continue the journey together. But for Marcella I should have joined her long ago. Even now I am tired—tired. To-morrow I will see my daughter

and tell her what I wish. Perhaps she will comply ; if not now, later—I cannot answer for that. Her heart has been sorely tried. I do not excuse what she has done, but I accept it as part of the past. Since she told me her secret I have been sadly depressed. I have felt a great weight upon my heart. The atmosphere is loaded with noxious vapors. Here is your father's gate. Come and see me to-morrow. Good night."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE DREAM.

THE next evening I went again to the parsonage. I was shown into the study. I had expected to find Dr. Stanyan, but it was Marcella who met me. She motioned me to the doctor's chair and sat down beside me. She was very pale. "I had a dreadful dream last night, a dreadful dream," she said abruptly. "It lasted so long that it seemed like a lifetime of anguish. Even now I cannot shake it off. It has appeared to me as they say ghosts do—several times. I knew it for the same hideous apparition."

"What was it like?"

"It had the features of guilt. Its hands were stained with blood, and there were crimson spots on its forehead. It spoke to me—I cannot remember the words. It was William. You were present and running from us. I tried to call out to you, but I could not hear my own voice. There was a sound of waters in my ears—a strangling sense of water in my throat. You turned about and looked at me. Oh, Frank, such a look!"

This dream was so real to her, and the relation of it reproduced it so vividly, and so agitated her feelings that I found it difficult to tranquillize her mind.

"Promise me," she said at length, "that you will avoid the company of William. A casual meeting with him may lead to fearful consequences. You at least



can shun the contamination and danger that attends all personal contact with him. You have already tested his fidelity and learned what it is to fall under his displeasure. He cherishes for you a hatred that would adopt the basest and most secret means of gratification. No sentiment of honor can hold him in check. Do not go with him into the woods or fields. Do not meet him alone in the highway. Avoid the lake, the hills where he takes his customary walks; especially avoid Kinley Hollow and the ledges. Above all do not allow him to provoke or tempt you into accepting a challenge to fight with him."

In earnest terms I assured her that I would observe every precaution, and that nothing should tempt me to engage in a duel with him. Indeed I recklessly promised everything calculated to allay the feverish apprehensions that had made such a tangled skein of her poor nerves, for I was alarmed to see her so intensely wrought upon. I was aroused by a cry of pain from her that gave me such a shock as sometimes assails a sleeper in the dead of night. I call it a cry, but it was rather a piercing moan, the instinctive effort of an overburdened heart to utter an unutterable pang.

"Look there! The Iris—death and the Iris," she said in a faint whisper, "I see it as I saw it last night—arching the mist of the cascade—born of it—melting into it, a clear, defined, heavenly rainbow. Under it the waters part like a white curtain, and in the middle space on a shelf of granite stand William and Charlotte; his arm about her waist, her hair rippling over his shoulder, both watching the stream. Death and the Iris—death and the Iris. But it is only another chapter in the revelation. The features and the look of the man are the same in both."

The wildness of her looks and gestures as she uttered these words showed only a continuation of the same uncontrollable mood that inspired the relation of her dream. Her voice had a plaintive thrill in it that shot a pang through my heart. Was reason trembling on the verge of the rocks that she so vividly pictured? I

sought to retrieve myself by going back to a time that antedated all thought of love between her and me. She listened, and appeared to busy herself picking up the lost threads of our childish experiences, but soon her eyes began to wander again far, far away, and fix themselves upon things remote from my personal existence. The life that she had led separate from me—so bitter—so intense—was thrust upon me in spite of her efforts to banish it. Then I tried to conjure up bright visions of the future. She looked upon them with introverted, retrospective eyes. The earth was cleft asunder at her feet, and I was standing on the other side of the chasm too remote for communication.

When I arose to go home she threw herself between me and the door, and intercepted me.

"You shall not go, Frank. If you leave me now, you will never see me again."

I waited for her father's return. His coming partially tranquillized her. Then I went away in a state of wondering apprehension of what would happen as well to myself as to Marcella.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE ARBITRATION.

THE day at last came for the meeting of the arbitrators to settle the rights of the claimants to the parsonage property. Never before or since the revival had our community been in such a state of excitement. Every dwelling within a circle of two miles around the meeting house was converted into an inn. As many as twenty clergymen were quartered on the more wealthy families. My father had six at his house. Dr. Stanyan, Dr. Carew and Deacon Trowbridge had more guests than they could well entertain. The body of the meeting house was filled, with the exception of the seats reserved for the clergy, long before the appointed hour, and the galleries, and even the aisles, which had

been fitted with temporary seats, were crowded to overflowing.

Precisely at nine o'clock Mr. Barker, followed by Squire Pickett and Mr. Garrett, walked up the middle aisle and took possession of the deacons' seat. Mr. Barker assumed the great mahogany chair occupied by Dr. Stanyan on Communion Sundays, while Squire Pickett sat on his right and Mr. Garrett on his left. My grandfather wore small clothes, which were always becoming to him on account of the straightness of his legs and a way of carrying himself indicating that he had a long life before him, and was not obliged to be in a hurry. His hair was drawn up over the top of his head and braided into a queue that fell between his shoulders like a snow wreath, and he sported a pair of gold knee-buckles that had once belonged to his father, the Reverend Christopher Barker, who had been one of the most uncompromising Episcopalians of the Seabury school. It was odd enough to see those knee-buckles, that had glittered on the legs of the enraged Christopher as he stood behind the communion rail of the church of England in our county town, glaring defiance at the puritan boys who were throwing clubs and stones at the chancel window—to see those very knee-buckles now presiding over the deliberations of a court which was to determine the conditions of a puritan charity.

But there they were, shining like the great carbuncle itself, reckless of the desecration, and looking as if they could have presided over the martyrdom of an Archbishop of Canterbury.

It was an equally sad testimony to the perishable nature of human opinions, that the velvet cuffs and antiquated collar of the same Reverend Christopher could not have found something to do more in keeping with their long-established christian character than to be present, aiding and abetting—to use the jargon of lawyers—in a transaction that should have caused them to blush crimson.

Mr. Barker's countenance was unusually solemn. His olive cheek and blue eyes were translucent with

"a dim religious light," suggestive of profound convictions on all general matters of faith, and an inscrutable reticence as to the subject in hand, calculated to inspire any amount of confidence in the minds of both parties. From my perch in the gallery I had a good profile view of him, and the dark back-ground of the opposite wall brought out his prominent features in bold relief.

"Guess if there's a knot-hole anywheres in the Saybrook Platform, them eyes will see it without Calvin's spectacles," whispered a sharp-nosed Episcopalian to his neighbor sitting next to me.

"I wouldn't swap Calvin's spectacles for Archbishop Laud's any day," replied the Puritan addressed, in a snubbing tone. "I never knew any good come of reading trumpery plays and papist prayers, and I think our church is a fool to poke its head into the lion's mouth. That's *my* opinion, if it's worth anything to you."

"I didn't ask it and I shan't pay for't," replied the sharp-nosed man.

This dialogue was interrupted by the coming of the clergy, who entered in a body, and, walking up the aisle while the congregation stood to receive them, took possession of the reserved seats. They were for the most part personable men, with well defined scholastic marks about them, and wore the clerical costume of the time.

To say that they were English gentlemen, Americanized by habits of living and influences of climate, and country gentlemen subtilized by refining studies and combatings with invisible foes; that they were chiefly tall, with small hands and feet, pale complexioned, clear visioned, with a happy mixture of the theoretical and practical; that they looked like men who could not be bought and sold; who were not afraid to speak their minds; who were sturdy rather than sensitive, and humble without compromising their self respect—is to say no more than was true of most of them.

Some were the sons and grandsons of clergymen, and they showed unmistakably in feature, form and carriage that they had been born to the inheritance of affinities that do not get their growth in the lifetime of any one man. The most noticeable of them all was Dr. Stanyan, who sat apart from the others in my father's pew, and exemplified in his appearance and a certain placid decorum, what Oliver Bramble used to say of him, that "he warn't to blame for bein' a gentleman no more'n for hevin' hair on his head."

My father sat next to him, as straight as an arrow, with his handsome sun-browned features fixed in inscrutable repose and his keen blue eyes fastened upon Deacon Trowbridge's wig as if they would have burnt holes in it. But what cared the deacon for that? What cared he for anything?

Not much, one would have thought who had chanced to see him, seated in his chair beside Mr. Filer, magnificently dressed, casting into the shade even his own stupendous spectacles, by the preternatural distension of the dialectic ridge running across his forehead, by the magnificence of his watch-seal and the sheen of a pair of silver knee-buckles twice as big as Mr. Barker's gold ones. Those were the identical buckles worn by the Reverend Elijah Trowbridge in the halcyon days when he sat in his arm chair and rubbed his hands upon his knees to throw off the over-charge of electricity that trickled down from his pen while he was framing the immortal sentences of "Supplicia." If he had allowed more of it to escape in this way, his buckles might have been melted by it. This would have been all the better for Madam Higginson—as the succession and force of the shocks is dependent on the size of the current. Perhaps in this event the contumacious woman might have escaped that last whipping at the cart-tail. But then a wholesome example would have been lost to the world, and the motto "*Fiat Justicia*" on the Trowbridge arms would never have become such a terrible verity as the good man made it.

With the exception of an occasional glance at the

clergy and the court, Deacon Trowbridge gazed upon vacancy, and looked conscious of conferring an infinite honor upon that respectable abstraction by contemplating it. He had an air of having come from a remote past, and of looking forward to an equally remote future, that could not have been assumed. If not a reality it was a very impressive self-delusion.

Mr. Phillips was in attendance, dressed in a suit of plain black, with a voluble face and a blithe word for everybody. He almost made the clergy behave with impropriety by going from one to another and telling them fantastic anecdotes.

Mr. Filer, however, occupied my attention more than he. He wore a shirt ruffled both at the bosom and the wrists, and, to do special honor to the occasion, appeared in a brand new suit of small clothes. As he had no calves to his legs, and could in no way be made to look like a gentleman, I could think of nothing better to liken him to than a monkey on ship-board, who has stolen the chaplain's clothes and is trying to personate him before the assembled passengers and crew.

The solemnity with which he showed his immense teeth; the subdued glance at the clergy that seemed to say "not all the piety in the world is confined to your cloth;" the consciousness of possessing profound legal treasures that must perish with him, deeply impressed me. He was constantly moving his fingers and passing them through his bristly hair or tugging at his buttons.

Mr. Bramble, as our only acting constable, had charge of the police arrangements, and went stooping about among the benches and chairs in the aisles, with his staff of office under his arm and his hands in his pockets, looking sedulously at the vacant seats and employing himself in compelling somebody to move up or down to make room for somebody else. When the preliminaries were over the court was formally opened, then Mr. Filer, with a look worthy of a martyr, arose and self the declaration. It contained not only the usual of ther of chaff to be found in all our legal forms bor-

rowed from England, but exhibited a quaintness peculiar to the pleader, and abounded in rhetorical flourishes over which he lingered with paternal fondness. When he had finished reading, he was asked if he had any statement to make before calling the witnesses for the plaintiff.

"May it please the court," replied Mr. Filer, rising slowly and speaking in a nasal drawl that indicated how entirely the fate of all sublunary things, as well as the interests of the church militant and triumphant, were hanging on the deliberations of the hour:

"May it please the court, I have a brief statement to make touching this extraordinary case. Perhaps nothing in the history of the world can present a parallel to this case. I shall offer evidence to show that the honored grand-sire of my client—Deacon Juba Trowbridge—a christian gentleman of the old school, with the blood of the author of "*Supplicia*" flowing in his veins: a work written in one of the learned tongues: a work which your honors have doubtless often lingered over with rapture—I say I shall offer evidence to prove that this scion of a venerable stock, then like Jacob well stricken in years and trembling on the verge of the grave, looking as it were from the middle of the river of death through the alabaster gates upon the glories, may it please the court, of the New Jerusalem, with the fear of God before his eyes, and with a desire to perpetuate the preaching of the Word in its purity, to the end that this little Zion might continue to all generations to be to others as it had been to him, the threshold to everlasting life—made his last will and testament, and among other provisions indited the following, that is to say:"

Here Mr. Filer read the clause in the will on which the suit was brought and resumed:

"May it please the court, it is with diffidence and inexpressible pain that I proceed. The sincere milk of the word, under this benign bequest, was dealt out to the lambs of this flock by the Reverend Jonathan Everett, until that good shepherd was called home.

How faithfully he went in and out before this people, how graciously he ministered to them, with what burning eloquence he warned them of the wrath to come, the witnesses will speak. Not the least among these witnesses are those glowing discourses of his, in his own beautiful chirography, replete with sound doctrine and terrible admonitions, which you will have the rare felicity of reading. They will be before you, and the members of the court will have ample time, during this protracted investigation, to read a whole barrel of them, for such a casket has been selected, may it please the court, for the transmission of these jewels to posterity, by the degenerate grandson of the author," here Mr. Filer cast a withering glance at my father—"classing these sacred relics with the grain and potatoes that he raises in his fields.

"We shall show you that this provision of the will was kept equally inviolable by the immediate successor of Mr. Everett. It was reserved for the present incumbent to depart from the line of doctrine marked out by the bequest, and lead away the unwary members of the flock into by and forbidden paths, where their feet should be torn with briars and thorns in their wanderings upon the dark mountains. We shall prove, may it please the court, that under the ministrations of the present incumbent, in the language of the great puritan poet, Milton, to be found in his noble elegy, 'Lycidas:'

'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed,  
But swol'n with wind and the rank mist they draw,  
Rot inwardly and foul contagion spread.'"

"The counsel," broke in Mr. Barker, with a hood-winked irony not easy to distinguish from simplicity, "will cite the page and section of the authority referred to."

"It is a classical quotation," said Mr. Filer, in a deprecating tone.

"I can't help it, sir. If it is important to the issue, we must examine the context."



"But it ain't strictly an authority, sir,"

"Then don't bewilder the court with it. What do you say, Brother Garrett. Don't you find it confusing?"

"I don't understand it," said Mr. Garrett. "Mr. Lycidas may have preached one doctrine and Dr. Stanyan another. But the question is whether Dr. Stanyan preaches the same doctrine that Mr. Everett did."

"Go on, sir," said Mr. Barker.

"One remark more," said Mr. Filer. "One single remark more and I have done. I have summoned here in behalf of my client, some of the most eminent of the clergy who have examined the sermons of Mr. Everett and compared, or rather contrasted them, with the flighty speculations of this modern Chrysostom, and those speculations will be attested by some of the fathers of this church who heard and noted them down at the time. The healing spirit of the former is beautifully illustrated by words familiar to every member of the court :

' Father of all, in every age  
In every clime adored ;  
By saint by savage and by sage  
Jehovah, Jove or Lord—'

"Hold there," said Mr. Barker. "One thing at a time. Whom do you cite?"

"Alexander Pope."

"A pantheist, sir," exclaimed Mr. Barker ; "a pantheist or worse. A wretch who never knew the difference betwixt saints and savages, and mistook Jehovah for Jupiter. A thief, sir, who stole his thoughts from Bolingbroke and his tropes from Boileau. What do you say, Brother Garrett?"

"I am willing to hear anything," said Mr. Garrett, "that will throw light on the doctrines of Dr. Stanyan. But I cannot sit by and hear Jonathan Everett likened to the Pope of Rome."

"I have done," said Mr. Filer, sitting down into his seat.

Mr Phillips then rose and declined making any statement. "I think," said he, "that Brother Filer's is broad enough for both."

"Call the witnesses for the plaintiff," said Mr. Barker.

The witnesses, consisting of clergymen and members of our church, were sworn, and the Rev. Dr. Epaphroditus Hilton was first called. He was a small, thin man, eighty-seven years old. To say that he was wrinkled would not describe him so well as to say that he was a wrinkle. He had very light eyes, a Roman nose, and wore a wig that would have been too large for Mr. Phillips. The only things about him that his wig did not eclipse were his nose and his scowl. It lent additional terrors to them. He was noted throughout the country for his keenness in smelling out heresies in doctrine. His nose was apparently made for that express purpose. He knew the Saybrook Platform, and all the rulings under it, by heart. He squared everything to the old yard-stick. Whatever was too long, he chopped off; whatever was too short, he spliced. To him the doctrines were all in all. Whoever failed to see them as he did was certain to be damned. The thing was not debatable. If anybody attempted to debate it or put in an apology for such blindness, that person would be damned too. Dr. Hilton could snuff a false wind of doctrine for miles, no matter which way it blew. Socinianism, Arianism, Antinomianism, and all the other isms, for honestly believing which such multitudes are preparing themselves for everlasting death—he could nose them leagues and leagues away. If there was any one bad theologic smell that he could detect sooner than another it was Socinianism. He was a literalist. He believed that God began the work of creation early, about six o'clock, on Monday morning, kept steadily at the task for just six days, looked upon His enterprise, when he had completed it, with great self-com-

placency, pronounced it good, and then took the seventh day to recruit His overtaxed powers. He believed in a geographical hell, with a latitude and a longitude, a length, breadth and depth; a lake of fire, fed by inexhaustible springs of sulphur and seething with waves of melted brimstone; and that the whole human race, with the exception of a handful called the elect, was, or would be, swimming about in it in company with innumerable devils, acting under the orders of one king devil: and that this would be their occupation throughout eternity. He believed that Heaven was a walled town, with alabaster gates and a golden key, ruled by a God who wore his crown night and day and observed an everlasting silence, and that the saints, all decorated with crowns, with palm branches in their hands, spent the ages of eternity in doing nothing but singing anthems. He had such a respect for the personality of the devil that he would allow no one to trench upon his attributes. He had spent six years of his life in writing a commentary on the book of Job, in which he proved that every part of it was historical and to be literally construed. He had once caused one of his own deacons to be excommunicated for expressing a doubt on the subject of that celebrated meeting of Satan with Job while the former was walking to and fro in the earth and up and down in it. As near as I can remember, the deacon had dropped an intimation to his wife, in the privacy of his own bedroom, to the effect that this passage had a figurative significance; and she, in a fit of domestic spleen, had told of it. At any rate it got wind in some way, and the poor man was sent to the devil in good earnest. In justice to Dr. Hilton I will say that the excommunicated man was restored to membership on his death-bed, upon confession of his high-blown conceit, and after making a humble apology to Dr. Hilton for contumacious words, charging the doctor with illiberal sentiments.

Such was the uncompromising character of the witness first called in behalf of the plaintiff. I must add

that he had hated Dr. Stanyan for many years for differing with him as to the proper construction to be given to a Greek word in the Epistle to the Corinthians, and had made this difference a bitter personal affair. I do not remember the passage, nor do I know the merits of the controversy. At any rate Dr. Hilton had not spoken to Dr. Stanyan for fourteen years.

"I call," said Mr. Filer with a great spread of his arms, and without the least flexure at the elbows, "I call, may it please the court, the Rev. Dr. Hilton."

Dr. Hilton rose as he was called, and, although he was little more than five feet in stature, contrived to look as grand as a river-god emerging from his native element. How he did it was a mystery. I tried to anatomize his greatness, and satisfied myself that it was made up partly of his wig, partly of his nose, partly of his frown, but chiefly of the lofty theologic repose of his manner. With his arms folded, he made a scarcely perceptible inclination of his head, as much as to say "if anybody desires to consult the oracle, he will now be favored with an opportunity." Mr. Filer's manner toward him was much the same as that of a showman now-a-days to his pet statue of Washington. He was so much overawed by Dr. Hilton that he could not even look at him. He spoke to Dr. Hilton as a poet might invoke the muse.

"Dr. Hilton, will you be so kind as to inform the court if, in his life-time, you were acquainted with the Reverend Jonathan Everett?"

"It pleased God to give me the confidence and fellowship of that departed saint from my first coming to the ministry until his decease."

"Have you often heard him preach?"

"Very often."

"On what occasion?"

"On the Sabbath and on week days. May I be allowed to refresh my memory with a memorandum?"

"Yes, if it was made at the time," said Mr. Barker.

"Thank you. It was so made. I have kept a re-

cord of all my experiences for the last seventy years. I have heard Brother Everett preach one election sermon, seven installation sermons, three Thanksgiving sermons, five fast day sermons and seventeen discourses on the Lord's day where there was no special occasion. I have also heard him deliver six charges at installations, five addresses on giving the right hand of fellowship; one entitled 'a warning to backsliders,' one on Biblical Exegesis, and a course of thirteen lectures to theological students on the doctrines."

At the conclusion of this formidable catalogue of experiences, Dr. Hilton pulled off his spectacles, put up his memorandum book and wiped his forehead with his pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Filer made a choking noise in his throat, expressive of astonishment and awe, and then resumed :

"With these minute details of personal observation before you, Dr. Hilton, what doctrines should you say Mr. Everett was in the habit of teaching?"

"The doctrines of Howe, Owen, Davenport, Bellamy, Edwards, Cotton, John Sherman, Jonathan Mitchell, Increase Mather and Cotton Mather—always subject, however, to the ruling of the Platform."

"What Platform, Dr. Hilton?"

"The Saybrook Platform, of course, sir. I know of no other basis of belief among *Christians*. I mean to be understood to say that Brother Everett was strictly, rigidly, uncompromisingly orthodox. I can see no better way of expressing myself."

"I should think not," said Mr. Filer, with reverential enthusiasm. "I should humbly think not, Dr. Hilton. With my poor faculties, I can conceive of nothing more clear and comprehensive."

"You had better reserve such commentaries for the argument," said Mr. Phillips.

"Perhaps you had better dictate to me, Brother Phillips, how I am to manage my case," said Mr. Filer in a threatening way. "Perhaps you had. Of course, you know a great deal more about the proprieties of professional practice than I do. I am well aware of my

inferiority to *you*," he added, with a look implying that he could have created the world in three days.

"Go on with your inquiries and stop all personalities," said Mr. Barker.

By this rebuke Mr. Filer's enthusiasm was a little chilled. However, he soon recovered himself. To use his own favorite expression, he was capable of being "jerked up suddenly, but always struck on his feet."

"I beg your Honor's pardon. I was hasty. I'm too im-pet-uous. It is the great curse of my life. Now, Dr. Hilton, have the goodness to state if you are acquainted with the Rev. John Stanyan?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you known him?"

"Ever since he was a boy at school."

"Have you ever heard him preach?"

"Often."

"Does he teach the same doctrine taught by Mr. Everett?"

"No, sir."

"What doctrines does he promulgate?"

"Those held by the founders of the Socinian school."

Mr. Filer looked at the court, at the clergy, at the church members, and then at the ceiling and shook his head.

"A Socinian is he? Ha!"

"Yes, sir."

"Be pleased to enumerate some of the tenets of that order."

"They deny that Christ is God and claim that he came into the world with only delegated powers."

"Very well, sir; what else?"

"They hold that the sin of the human race is only imitative of Adam, and that virtue in man is in the same way imitative of Christ."

"What else?"

"They deny the personality of the devil."

"Deny the personality of the devil, do they? What else?"

"They convert the literalism of the Bible into metaphors."

"Metaphors—r—ugh! Anything else?"

"They don't believe in everlasting damnation."

"Impossible! Well, are all these things necessary to salvation?"

"Undoubtedly."

"H—m. Is Dr. Stanyan wanting in all these points of belief?"

"I consider him so."

"Outside of Socinianism is he a safe teacher?"

"I do not think he is."

"Why?"

"He departs from the approved construction given by Biblical scholars to the original Greek and Hebrew. He strains difficult passages into strange meanings to suit his own theories."

"Bad scholarship, eh?"

"I fear it is the result of a perverted judgment. He is a tolerably good scholar, I believe."

"Perverted judgment? Ha! Thank you, doctor. You can cross-examine the witness, Brother Phillips. I should think it would be a difficult task for a modest man to cross-examine Dr. Hilton, but you can try it."

The contrast between the personal appearance of Mr. Phillips and Dr. Hilton, and the look with which they regarded each other was suggestive enough. The lawyer weighed three hundred pounds, and the doctor ninety. I only speak of their avoirdupois, for the wisdom and dignity of Dr. Hilton, could they have been reduced to pounds and ounces would have overbalanced the material universe. But the doctor, stretching across the celestial hemisphere, was rather to be counted among the imponderables, and with his immense wig was more like a glorified comet than a world.

Mr. Phillips, sadly wanting in reverence, looked upon the doctor as a giant might upon a fly; and the doctor looked upon Mr. Phillips as an archangel might upon chaos. He folded his arms closer and seemed to shiver as he thought of the atmosphere he was leaving,

fanned by seraphs' wings, and of the realm into which he was about to plunge.

"Are you on friendly terms with Dr. Stanyan, Dr. Hilton?"

"I am charitably disposed toward him."

"Are you on friendly terms with him?"

"I have no quarrel with him. I hope I am at peace with all mankind. We once had a scholastic difference about a Greek text, but that was long ago."

"Do you speak to him when you meet?"

"No, sir."

"How many times have you heard him preach within the last ten years?"

"Only once."

"On what occasion?"

"On the Lord's day in this house."

"On what subject?"

"Literalism."

"In that discourse did he set forth any doctrine not held by Mr. Everett?"

"He did. He said that there was no literal hell with fire and brimstone, that the saints in Heaven did not spend the endless ages of eternity in singing psalms; that they did not wear crowns on their heads and carry palm-branches in their hands; that the celestial streets were not paved with gold, and that God did not sit on a real throne as is represented in the scriptures; but that all this language is figurative. He said that our pursuits in the next world must be similar to what they had been in this. I also understood him to deny that Christ is God; not in set terms, but by implication."

"What language did he use?"

"I cannot repeat it. He dwelt a great deal too much upon the human nature of the Saviour, and spoke of his divine mission in such a way that I felt sure he considered him as acting solely in a representative capacity. I was so shocked at hearing him express such sentiments that I arose and left the meeting-house."

"So you did not hear all that was said?"

"No."



"In whose pew did you sit?"

"Deacon Trowbridge's."

"At whose request did you come?"

"Deacon Trowbridge's."

"Did he tell you that he wanted you to spy out heresies to lay a foundation for this suit?"

"You need not answer the question," said Mr. Filer.

"It is an insult to a gentleman of your character."

Dr. Hilton's nostrils dilated and contracted, and his cheek grew livid under the shadow of his frown. He did not deign to make any reply.

"I insist upon an answer," said Mr. Phillips addressing the court.

"What do you say, Brother Garrett?" asked Mr. Barker.

"If it was anybody but a minister I should say yes; as it is—what do you think Squire Pickett?"

"He's a witness all the same if he is a minister," said the squire, doggedly.

"Answer the question in your own way, doctor," said Mr. Barker conciliatingly.

"Deacon Trowbridge asked me to *scrutinize* what Dr. Stanyan said, to see if there was anything heretical in it."

"With a view to instituting a suit to recover the parsonage?"

"I believe something of the sort was spoken of."

"Very well. You came to look for evidence, and, as is usual in such cases, you *found* it," said Mr. Phillips, tartly. "That's all, doctor."

Dr. Hilton made a bow to the court that was more like a gracious dismissal than a leave-taking, and resumed his seat among the wigs and kneec-buckles. Ten other clergymen were called by Mr. Filer and cross-examined by Mr. Phillips, leaving the case as Dr. Hilton had done, in a bewildering haze of obscurity. These ten witnesses occupied two entire days. They had all heard Dr. Stanyan preach, and five of them confessed that they had gone to hear him at the suggestion of Deacon Trowbridge. Of

the others two were chance visitors, and the other three admitted with reluctance that they were, at the time, looking out for a vacant charge, and would have been willing to succeed to Dr. Stanyan had his place become vacant.

Several of the disaffected church members were then called, and two more days were spent in examining them. Most of them got so far down into the theologic mire that no human hand could extricate them. It was surprising how little they understood of the matters that had been a life-long theme of contemplation to them. Although this was nominally an arbitration under rule of court, and should therefore have been decided on disinterested testimony, it had been agreed at the commencement of the trial that no witness should be excluded on account of any vested or contingent interest in the case. Mr. Filer had willingly consented to this arrangement in order to give Deacon Trowbridge a chance to testify, and Mr. Phillips was equally anxious to avail himself of the impression that would be produced by my father's pluck and by Dr. Stanyan's eloquence. So this arbitration, like all others that I ever attended, was a hand-to-hand conflict without rule or order; a chaos and a muddle, like a snow-balling frolic between two district schools.

The last witness called, on the part of the plaintiff, was Deacon Trowbridge. An entire day was consumed in getting his testimony before the court. If I had power to describe the manner of this witness, and could give to the reader any adequate idea of the malignant spirit that animated the pompous phraseology that he employed; if I could reproduce his reading of the copious notes that he brought forward as literal extracts from Dr. Stanyan's discourses, and the inferences that he drew from them, I would devote pages of this narrative to such a delineation. But I feel it to be hopeless and I forbear. It is enough to say that the deacon so overdid himself through excess of zeal, and floundered so under the pitiless cross-

examination of Mr. Phillips, that he exposed himself to the harsh judgments of the more disinterested hearers. When he had concluded it really seemed idle for the other party to offer a witness. Mr. Phillips occupied only half a day in the defense. After examining a few clergymen who were of sufficiently liberal spirit to understand Dr. Stanyan, and who were willing to do him justice, he called my father.

Intensely as his feelings were wrought up, and impetuous as he was in his manner, this witness still carried with every word he uttered the conviction that he was an honest man who was only clinging to his friend as a representative of the truth which he loved and revered. His testimony was received with the profoundest attention and respect. His loyalty to the minister; which I had feared would complicate his evidence, inspired universal confidence.

After him, several church members, both male and female, were called. They all corroborated what he had said, and some of them contradicted the notes of Deacon Trowbridge by others taken by themselves at the time when the discourses in question were delivered.

The last witness put upon the stand by the defense was Dr. Stanyan himself. He stepped out of my father's pew into the aisle, and began his statement in a very low key, scarcely above a whisper. He gave a clear historical outline of his ministry from the first day down to that moment. He unfolded the plan of salvation as he understood it, and as he had always taught it. He answered every specific charge of heresy by a direct denial or by an explanation. To the charge of Socinianism he put in an indignant and unqualified traverse. He took up the declarations of our Lord as recorded in the four evangels, and made them a text from which he preached a most masterly discourse on the divinity of His mission and the superhuman grandeur of His attributes and character. As he warmed with the theme, his features lighted up like an inspired apostle's; his voice grew in volume and his

frame took larger proportions. Gradually he advanced from the place where he had first stood and kept moving up toward the deacon's seat, pouring out utterances from the divine oracles with such a passionate fervor and such absorbing assimilation that they seemed to be his own. When he turned to appeal to the clergy, they all—with the exception of Dr. Hilton—rose by a spontaneous impulse and stood to listen.

His address—I cannot call it testimony—occupied about an hour in its delivery. At its close, the arbitrators, the clergy, and the spectators were nearly all standing, and tears were streaming down many a weather-beaten cheek that had long been a stranger to them.

The arguments of counsel followed.

After a few moments spent in consultation with his co-arbitrators Mr. Barker rose and delivered the opinion of the court, which was afterwards written out *in extenso* in the form of an award.

"Gentlemen of the Clergy and Laity:—Although I have been a magistrate nearly fifty years, it is none the less strange to me that I was placed at the head of this board. I never could manage my own affairs, and I suppose that is the reason why I am thought fit to dispose of other people's.

"I suppose you all know that I do not like Congregationalism, and that if I had my way about it every meeting-house in the State should be converted into a church, where the surplice is worn and the good old-fashioned prayers are used."

Here Dr. Hilton got up and walked down the centre aisle, and Oliver Bramble whispered to me, "Mr. Barker's got one of his highs on. He's agoin agin Stanyan an' th' hull on us."

Mr. Barker went on:

"But any religion is better than none. We are not quite sure what doctrines Jonathan Everett preached. These winds of doctrine blow from all quarters of the Heavens and keep changing. They always will change as long as you keep a weather-cock on the meeting house steeple. One year with another all the winds

take a turn at it. Perhaps the nor'-wester has a little the best of it, but they all keep the air astiring and make the crops grow.

"It is plaguey hard to decide what Deacon Juba meant, but, as the deacon isn't here himself to explain, we have made up our minds to let the society keep the parsonage."

So was this vexed question of title set forever at rest.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE LODGE.

TO save myself from the charge of growing garrulous as I grow old, I have concluded to insert in this narrative the following letters. I give them without dates, but in all respects just as they were written:

"DEAR MARCELLA :—I have in vain sought a brief interview with you. This you have avoided. I have not even been allowed to explain the nature and cause of my intimacy with Charlotte. It is painful to me to recur to the friendship so many years existing between us, especially to the one subject so positively interdicted. Nothing but the most uncompromising necessity could compel me to break this resolve.

"Oh, Marcella, if you could be made aware of the half that I have suffered from your cruel neglect of me, I am sure you would at least give me an opportunity to plead my own cause. Thus driven to despair, I make this last effort to save myself. I beg you to grant me a word with you in private. If you will have it so, it shall be but a word. Let me disabuse your mind of false impressions relating to Charlotte. Above all let me try to convince you of the sincerity of my affection for you. This will be some little comfort to me. If I fail, I shall derive from it the strength which, alas, I have not now, to struggle with my fate. Remember that I am in a land of strangers. Oh, Mar-

cella, be like yourself. Be noble and just. If I am to remain in hopeless misery, let me know it from your own lips, after I have made a full disclosure to you.

"Faithfully, WILLIAM DART."

I have before me while I write the answer to this communication. The characters are clearly traced, and there is not a stain of age upon the paper, so carefully has it been preserved.

"MR. DART:—The request contained in your letter of yesterday cannot be granted. No explanation could alter my resolution, and no disclosure could convince me.

MARCELLA STANYAN."

The very next day after the date of this answer, while I was walking along the highway that leads over the summit of The Ridge, whence the lake and its surrounding hills can be better seen than from any other elevation near our house, a boy whom I did not know came running up to me, handed me the following note and disappeared before I could question him.

"MR. FRANCIS EVERETT:

*Sir*—Having satisfied myself that you have done me an irreparable wrong, I invite you to put the merits of the controversy, which you have so wantonly provoked, to a decisive test. Please name the time, place and weapons, and let the hour be as early as practicable.

Your ob't servant,

WM. DART."

I read this challenge twice over without moving from the place where I stood, and then carefully folded it up and put it into my pocket. Then I resumed my walk and kept on until I came to the great maple that pavilions the cradle of Kinley Hollow Brook. Here I sat down upon the very root that had supported me while listening to the disclosure that so wrung my heart, on the occasion described in a foregoing chapter, and busied myself, or rather my hand, for my thoughts were otherwise occupied, in scooping up the masses of foam that lay on the surface of the water. I should never have remembered this idle employment, but for

the shock that the chill froth gave to my nerves. I dashed it from me, wiped my fingers dry upon the fallen leaves, and went on again, striking into the depths of the woods that skirted the lake.

This wild region, tossed into a thousand billows of knoll and ridge by outcropping points of rock, and abounding in trees of a stubborn quality fit to be converted into charcoal, was a center of enterprise for the colliers. Here they built their log huts, and in favoring sites, where a flat surface could be found of sufficient area, bristled the coal pits, sending up dark columns of smoke into the clouds and filling the pitchy evergreens with their smothered breath. On the highest point of land that jutted over the lake stood a little summer-house embowered in trees. It had been there ever since my childhood, and, although a rude structure, it was so walled in with leaves of pine and hemlock that it never seemed to fall into disrepair, and, had it grown there, it could not have been more picturesque.

Musing upon the communication of Dart, and muttering over its contents to myself as I walked along, I came at last to this retreat, and sat down on a rustic bench, my back resting against a tree and my eyes on the water. A more tranquil place of retirement could not be imagined. There was a gentle breeze blowing from the southwest, and, moving with it, flocks of thin white clouds hovered in the sky, tracing little ripples of shadow on the face of the lake. Around me here and there rose the spires of smoke from the coal pits; above them a solitary hawk with outspread wings seemed to be dreaming in mid heaven, and the sound of the collier's axe broke so faintly on my ear, and was so long in coming after I saw the stroke, that I could hardly associate the two as cause and effect.

The floor of the lodge was carpeted with faded woodland grass, interlaced with ground-pine and prince's-feather, and tasseled with sprigs of wintergreen loaded with red berries.

It was not strange that with such auxiliaries to induce my favorite mental condition I soon fell into a fit

of abstraction and continued in this state nearly an hour, building unheard of castles with unapproachable towers and gables that defy imitation, and peopling them with inmates not to be classified among the inhabitants of earth or air, nor individualized in fable. It was not strange that I forgot the burden that I had just before found so heavy, and that, occupied with this imperial architecture, William Dart was no more present to my mind than if he had been dead a thousand years. I suppose I had spent a third of my life in just such waking trances. Perhaps I have wasted about the same proportion of my time since then in a similar way.

I was aroused from this reverie by the restless curiosity of my own eyes, prying about among the ground-pines without any authority from me, amusing themselves, as I imagine, in searching out wintergreen berries. At any rate they fell upon an object that they could not make out without my help. Sluggishly I came to the rescue. I got up and walked to the place where the suspicious looking thing lay, half concealed by the leaves, under the opposite bench. I stooped and pulled it forth. It was a sunbonnet. It had in it two or three detached pieces of lilac ribbon, a pair of gentleman's gloves and a gold locket with two locks of hair, one light, the other dark, tastefully braided together. I knew the bonnet and the locket to be Charlotte's. The light braid of hair I also believed to be hers. Its fellow, with the gloves, I had no doubt had adorned the person of my mortal enemy. I was fired with sudden indignation. "There is no end to the complications of this man's wickedness. I will fight him and kill him," I said to myself. "I am a better marksman than he, and I shall be nerved by the justice of my cause. But the promise to Marcella; oh, yes, the promise." In the impetuosity of the moment I had forgotten that.

So I fell into a fit of bitter musing, chafing over the plots and malice of Dart, entertaining all kinds of murder in my heart, concealed under specious names of hon-



or, justice, retribution, punishment of past crimes and prevention of meditated one ; fretting against the barrier of my promise, tugging at the manacles of reason and conscience, until with the drops standing out on my forehead, and my hands convulsively trembling, I yielded to my fate.

"I will keep my word," I said.

After I had come to myself and was so fully reassured that I had no fear of being called a coward, I tore off the blank half of the sheet on which Dart had written the challenge, and scrawled my answer in pencil as follows:

"MR. WILLIAM DART:

*Sir*—As no possible result that could come from the encounter would be an adequate punishment of your villainies, I refuse to meet you on the footing proposed.

FRANCIS EVERETT."

I folded the half sheet, fastened it as well as I could with the fragments of the wafer, and hallooed to a woodman who was busy roofing his hut at a little distance from me. He came running up to me, out of breath.

"Take this, go to the village, find out Mr. Dart and deliver it into his own hands. There is a shilling. Be quick. If you don't find him return the letter to me this evening."

He started at once in the direction of the village, and I set forth on my homeward path.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### SUBJUGATION.

I WAS surprised that evening by the news that Charlotte had gone away to visit a friend in a remote country. I had seen less of her than usual during the recent excitement in our village ; but I had noticed a great alteration in her manner. She was moody and excitable, sometimes unnaturally talkative and gay, but

oftener silent and depressed. She grew pale and languid. Her father proposed that she should ask Marcella to join her in a little journey to the sea shore or elsewhere. She welcomed the suggestion of a change of scene, but she was resolute not to have a companion, and Dr. Carew as usual yielded to her will. It was agreed that after making the visit to her friend, she should travel wherever else she pleased; and we hardly expected her back before the cold weather.

During Charlotte's absence I had no intercourse with William Dart. He went off once or twice, for a few days at a time,—with some of his college associates, he said—but nobody showed much curiosity about his movements. As for Dr. Carew, he seemed lost without his daughter.

Never was the commonly received maxim that the child will conquer the parent in the end, more truly exemplified than in the case of Charlotte and Dr. Carew. That the doctor was not at all the man he used to be was generally conceded by those who best knew him.

I was born to sympathize with just such a temperament as his, and while, from sensitive shyness, I avoided all appearance of watching him, I could not help thinking of him and wondering about him.

He was one of a class, who, from early disappointments or from finding the world unresponsive, put on an impenetrable coat of armor and wear it all the rest of their lives. If these men had only the power of utterance they would attract everybody to them. As it is, they repel. They are like those rare caverns that travelers go so far to seek; rock-encrusted, with narrow entrances to be crawled through on one's hands and knees; arched and domed within, dripping with liquid crystals, alight with the shining surfaces of streams that never saw the day, but in their night are more tender than any day; glittering with the fires of gold and silver fishes, and the reflection of candelabra and altars that never yet smoked with incense, shrines never consecrated but always consecrating.

Such men would be poets if they could find expression. As it is, they are in a sense greater than poets. They reflect in their silent under-world the face of God in His mysteries, to Him and to the few whom He pleases. I suppose the world will never learn that *to be* is greater than to *delineate being*. It is not without reason that God is manifested to the poet by the still small voice. The poet is himself a voice, an organ to hymn the harmonies of God. I cannot help thinking that the silent men are more like God in that they expend themselves in doing, not in harping—in self-sustaining rhythm of will, not in numbers.

I speak simply of what Dr. Carew might have been, for the day had gone by for him to become either this or that. He had begun life by looking forward; now he was only retrospective. He had tried to explain nature and unfold providence. Had he been content to follow them, his life would have demonstrated them. Now he almost doubted their existence. The two Charlottes had disappointed his hopes. The one had died in her youth. The other had also died to him. She had gone out of his sphere into one beyond, and what is that but death to those who are left behind? No matter whether the sphere be higher or lower, to the survivor it is negation, and that is death. The separation, the impossibility of communication, the shutting out of one from the other by impassable doors—let the tongue call it what it will, the heart calls it death.

In his mind the identity of his wife could sometimes hardly be separated from that of his daughter. When he saw her suddenly coming into a room or walking from him in the garden, he was startled. He had brooded over the absence of each so much that he could hardly tell which of the two was coming or going. What is incident to all imaginative persons in some conditions of mind had become to a degree chronic with the doctor. There was an underlying basis of consciousness, but this delusion kept growing upon him and blinding his eyes like a mist. He never went so far as to see the two together except

in his sleep, and then they were counterparts. He often spoke to Charlotte as if she had been the long lost one restored to him. He was very sensitive about this defect in his mental vision and took pains to conceal it from her. He treated her with the most caressing fondness. He never complained of her intimacy with Dart, and accepted his presence in the house as a thing not to be questioned.

No professional duty was neglected. The doctor's opinion in all critical cases was still the end of the law for miles around. He was still the same haughty, taciturn man in his demeanor toward his fellow practitioners; the same genial humor and robust wit characterized his intercourse with his simple-minded neighbors. A few of his intimate friends, among whom were Dr. Stanyan and myself, noticed that there was a change in him. He was pale and thin, and his prescriptions, formerly written in a clear round hand, were almost illegible. It was plain to us that the nervous frame was breaking down, and could not be kept up to the work put upon it.

No one durst break through the barrier of reserve built up between him and us, and inquire into the cause of his grief, but we felt sure that there was a grief deep and radical that was consuming him.

There was a very noticeable change in his habits. He attended meeting every Sunday, and was an attentive listener to Dr. Stanyan's preaching. Whether he was a worshipper or a caviller, nobody knew.

Who of us could tell what dark calamity awaited him?

Who knew less than he the shape in which it would come?

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### LOST.

EVERYTHING went on smoothly in the neighborhood. The coal pits kept sending up the spumes of dark smoke. The fitful autumn gales caught them

and whirled them into wreaths amid the tree tops. Fowling-pieces were heard in the woodlands summoning the young squirrel to quit his nest and the partridge to leave the airy circle half finished. Fowling-pieces were heard in stubble-land, too, arresting the flight of quail. In the glen where the fox was wont to double, his life was snuffed out by the rifle. The plowman was busy in the fallow turning furrows for the rye and winter wheat. At intervals the black cloud-curtains were looped up in the east and west, and then unexpectedly let down to screen the windows of the sunrise and sunset. Snow-squalls, heralded by birds with wings almost as white as their own, would now and then dash out from the cold corner, make a swoop at the day and perish in its blaze. The little chickadee, that camp-follower of the cold, would mistake these feints of winter for a real attack and come chirping after them, uncertain whether to be happy or miserable, and on finding out that he had obeyed a false alarm, settle down by the door-step and ply his dainty bill to the picking up of crumbs.

The nights grew shorter, the twilight had more of lead and less of vermillion, the solitary apple hanging so high that the school-boy was afraid to climb for it, crinkled by the wind, lost heart and color and dropped with the last dead leaf to the ground. Something must have ailed the lake, for its surface was all of a tremble, as if the underlying powers of the water already felt the ice cracking over them, so that they could only get blind glimpses of the sun and could not even feel the glamour of the moon. The woodpecker was dressed in his holiday clothes. He had never looked so handsome in the summer. The very idea of changes in the weather that nobody could foresee or account for, suited his vagabond life and rakish temperament. He might have been a kingfisher possessed of the devil, with his jaunty cap and his rollickings on the dry limbs of the trees. So the year went on.

It was Saturday, the 25th of November. A smoky day it was, when one would have been glad to lie on

the grass, but for taking cold, or to sit under a tree, but for the nakedness of its branches. There was only one person in the world just then whose company I preferred to my own, and as I could not avail myself of hers, I took my rifle after breakfast and started for the forest. It was my delight in those days to shoot birds and squirrels. Indeed, I was not very discriminating in my choice. I had much rather see such creatures enjoying themselves now in their own way, but from my mere excess of life, I took a pleasure then in extinguishing theirs.

I made a wide circuit that day, and met with unexampled success. I took my own time for everything. Sauntering in the woods for ten hours and junketing alone would be but a poor way for an old man to amuse himself, but somehow I got through the day quite to my own satisfaction; and before sundown I found myself in Kinley Hollow sitting by the brook and throwing pebbles in it. It was nearly dark. I sat down on a spur of the rock just where the current comes rushing on to take its leap into the chasm. I was so near the water that I could reach it with my hand, and was arresting the bubbles as they whirled past, and looking through the rising mist at the black shadows of the evergreens.

While I was busy recounting the events of the day, and associating them with the challenge and my indignant answer, I heard the report of a pistol shot, and felt the wind of a ball as it passed my ear, and buried itself in the trunk of the pine. The shot was fired from behind me, and I felt the instant suspicion that it had been aimed at me. I sprang to my feet and faced about in time to see a man emerging from the shade of a hemlock that grew by the brook. As soon as he came into the light, I recognized William advancing rapidly toward me. His look was so fierce, and his attitude so threatening, I saw at a glance that he intended to follow up his cowardly attempt to assassinate me by some other act of violence. He had a pistol in his hand, but as I believed it to be the one he had already discharged,

I felt less apprehension from it than from a grapple hand to hand. If it should come to this I knew him to be so much superior to me in strength, that he would easily hurl me from the precipice into the pool. I glanced at my rifle lying at my feet. I instantly called to mind that I had not reloaded it after shooting my last partridge in the alder-cover.

I had nothing for it, therefore, but to place as much distance as I could between myself and the precipice. So I made toward him a few steps, when he stopped, pointed the pistol at my head and snapped it. It missed fire. I closed with him and clutched at the weapon as he was again cocking it, and without a word spoken on either side we struggled madly; I, for the possession of the pistol and to keep him back; he, to hold it, and at the same time crowd me nearer to the verge of the precipice. I felt that it was a desperate game, and I played it with a fierceness equal to his. He was not inferior to me in agility, and in weight and strength I was no match for him. I was soon pushed forward to the place where I had been sitting. Just as I was reaching out my hand to grasp an overhanging branch of the pine, William stumbled against one of the roots of the same tree, and, as he fell forward, the pistol was discharged, and the ball entered, as I suppose, at the temple and passed out on the other side of the skull, near the top of his head. In the instinctive effort to rise to his feet, he lifted himself upon his hands and knees and rolled from the edge of the rock into the whirlpool. I crept around to the foot of the ledge, lay down upon the brink, and looked over into the eddies that went spinning round the basin; but the gathering night, the black shadows of the trees and overhanging rifts, with the shroud of mist that enveloped them, rendered it impossible for me to discern any object in the water. Once I thought I saw his upturned face and his arms outstretched as if supplicating aid. I called madly out to him in the darkness. I could hear no other answer than the echoes of the cliffs giving back my

voice, blended with that of the plunging stream. As God is to be my judge, this is all that I know of the death of William Dart.

It was late when I returned home. The family had retired and the lights were all extinguished in the house. I crept noiselessly up stairs. For the first time in several years I allowed Haco to share my room. I watched him hour after hour, and saw him shift his position to turn his face away from the moonlight as it crept along the floor. I seemed to hear a great many disturbing noises that night, but I suppose they were imaginary, since the dog, who was an excellent sentinel, gave no sign of alarm until the day was dawning. Then, of sudden, when I was unconscious of any sound, he started up and gave a low growl. I lay still and listened. Soon I heard a horse galloping up the road in front of the house. The sound stopped at the gate and I heard my own name called or rather almost whispered faintly but distinctly :

"Frank ! Frank Everett ! Come to the window."

I had not undressed when I lay down the night before. I arose and went.

"Who is there ?" I asked, looking out into the blank, dark dawn.

"Is it you, Frank ?"

"Yes, what do you want ?"

"Don't disturb the house. Come down stairs. I want to speak with you."

"But who are you ?"

"No matter. Come down. Be quick."

I obeyed. When I came to the gate the horse's head was close to it and the rider sat facing me, muffled in a cloak so that his features were entirely concealed.

"Come outside," he said in a voice that I did not recognize.

I opened the gate and walked up to him.

"You don't know me. I pulled the cloak about my face it was so cold."

"Dr. Carew ?"



"Yes."

He removed the screen and disclosed features as white as a leper's.

"What is the matter, doctor?"

"Is Charlotte here?"

"I can't say. I was absent from home yesterday and came back late."

Just then I heard my father's bedroom window creaking.

"Who is there?" he asked, thrusting out his head.

"Is Charlotte here?" again faltered the doctor.

"What Charlotte?"

"Charlotte Carew."

"No."

"Not here?"

"No."

"Not here yesterday? Not here to spend the night?"

"She has not been here at all."

"Oh, my God!"

Before we had time to make an inquiry the doctor was out of hearing.

My father shut the window and I went back to my room.

We sat down at breakfast at an unusually early hour. It was Sunday morning, and I was ready dressed for meeting. As soon as my mother came into the room she looked at me in alarm.

"What has happened to you, Frank?"

"Have you not heard the news about Charlotte, mother?"

"Yes, but something else has happened. What is it, Frank?"

"Nothing."

She looked keenly at me but said no more. My father was silent, brooding, I suppose, over the doctor's strange visit. He did not notice me. None of us could taste a morsel of food. We all started for the village an hour before the time for the ringing of the first bell.

I set out on foot. As I passed the burying-ground I saw a man within the enclosure who appeared to be engaged in reading the inscriptions on the monuments. The figure was familiar to me and I sought to avoid an interview. I had not gone many steps before he called out to me.

"What air yew in sech a hurry for, Mister Frank? Stop a minnit. Doant want to see me, dew ye?"

Oliver cleared the wall and came up with me as he spoke.

"What are you doing there, Oliver?"

"Studyin' eowt the dead folks. Heard the news?"

"What is it?"

"Crewcifyin' times. Mr. Porter Green, the man 'ez convarted Sally an' me, 's ben tried at the county seat an' convicted."

"Of what?"

"O' forgin' an' hoss stealin'. What is wuss, his feathers is all plucked eowt. It's ben'proved agin him 'ez he ain't no minister o' th' gospel. He's confessed 'ter bein' a wolf in sheep's clothin'. I wish I'd 'a let Stanyan convart me. It'r jest my luck, I allers cut 'a hoss block with a razor. I never had no discrimination in th' use o' tools. Ef I was to go for a pitch-fork, I should fetch a burnin' iron. I'm most afraid I haint got the right 'noculation stuff! Ef it should be small-pox inside o' kine-pox! Whew! But I spose ef the medicine is good, it'll operate ef the devil gives it tew ye. It's queer ez Green should pull me eowt an' slip in himself. Th' aint no human way o' tellin' th' sheep from the goats. Deacon Trowbridge 'll go next."

"When did you get the news, Oliver?"

"Yisterday mornin'. It made a dretful buzzin' in teown 'mongst the convarts. Th' terbacker planter haint ben heard on since. Lotty Carew's met him and gone off with 'im they say."

"But Miss Carew is away on a visit."

"No, she come home yisterday. When she heard about Porter Green they say she fainted dead away: and now they can't find her no-where."

I let Oliver's tongue run on as it would without attempting any reply.

When we arrived at the village we found the whole community assembled. Rumor had as many tongues as in the days celebrated by Virgil. The more absurd the story the more readily it gained credence. Some said that Dart had taken Charlotte away to North Carolina; others that they had been seen visiting the Rev. Porter Green at his cell in the county jail; still others that they had walked out into the woods together and had not returned. The wildest kind of conjecture is that about lost persons. On the present occasion this fanciful contriver outdid herself. It was in no fit frame of mind that I answered the tolling of the bell and met the assembly in the meeting house. The invocation was made, the psalm was sung, the selection from the Bible, read and the text given out, before our minds were half composed. The topic of discourse related to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. I well remember how singularly appropriate it seemed to me. Dr. Stanyan had an original way of treating the most desponding passages of scripture, and on this occasion he so handled his subject as to make the road to Heaven so easy that any sinner might have found heart to undertake the journey. He was not long in getting our attention, and swept us along in one of his Ciceronian currents that used to be so irresistible to me.

The tares had been winnowed from the wheat in our church so thoroughly, that the good man had it all his own way. Even Squire Pickett and Mr. Barker were there, and the prevailing silence showed the power of the orator to be unshaken by the late controversies.

In the middle of the discourse the same young man who had handed me the challenge came up the aisle hurriedly to my father's pew and whispered something in his ear. Dr. Stanyan was at the time engaged in illustrating the double nature of Christ. My father went forward, ascended the pulpit stairs and communicated to the clergyman the intelligence thus received.

"Brethren," said Dr. Stanyan, "the services of the morning have been unexpectedly brought to a close by the receipt of painful intelligence. The lifeless body of William Dart has been found in the pool below Kinley Hollow Falls, horribly mutilated. You need lose no time in repairing to the scene of the supposed murder."

The congregation rushed out of the house with blind precipitation. Almost in a moment I found myself standing solitary in my old place in the gallery. The echoes of the voices from without alone broke the silence. After the first shock was over I left the meeting house and went into the street. Men and women were running to and fro in great excitement, uttering wild exclamations, making confused inquiries and giving unintelligible directions. A large part of the men had already set off for Kinley Hollow. Dr. Stanyan and my father were standing together in earnest conversation when Dr. Carew came up to them. He had forgotten in his excitement to put on his hat, and his long hair, blown about his shoulders by the brisk November wind, was scarcely whiter than his cheeks. His lips were livid, and his eye had a hopeless expression pitiable to witness.

"Will nobody go in search of my child?" he said. "Does it need all these men to fetch in one dead body? If he is dead she is dead. Perhaps he has murdered her and then drowned himself. Ring the bell, call the people back and send them to search the woods, the lake, the Hollow. O Charlotte, Charlotte!"

"He is right. Ring the bell," said my father. "Where is Bramble?"

"Here, sir."

Oliver caught hold of the bell-rope and gave the alarm. Oh, how the summons chilled me as it rang out on the clear air. The men and boys who had not gone to the Hollow came hurrying to the spot where we stood. Parties were soon formed and set out in all directions.

The doctor insisted on going forth with the others and was with difficulty restrained. Partly by force and partly by persuasion, Dr. Stanyan, my father and I succeeded in getting him home.

"Have you sent to your cousin Farrand's, doctor? Perhaps she is there," said Dr. Stanyan.

"I have just returned from there. She had not been heard of."

"When did your housekeeper last see her?"

"At ten o'clock yesterday morning. Nancy says that when Charlotte heard the news about Mr. Green's conviction, she fainted. When she came to herself she left the house, and has not been seen since."

"She sometimes visits Mr. Phillips's daughter. Perhaps she is in the valley," suggested my father.

"I had thought of that, too. Mr. Phillips sends me word that he has not seen her."

"But don't you remember, doctor," said I, "that only two years ago she alarmed you by going to the county town and spending the night at Judge Holmes's?"

The old gentleman's eye brightened with a gleam of hope.

"Will you drive over and make inquiry, Frank?"

"With all my heart."

In a few moments I was on the road to the county seat. My journey proved a fruitless one. Nobody had seen or heard of Charlotte.

When I returned, the body of Dart had already been brought to the village and placed in the town hall where it was now under guard. As I drove up to Dr. Carew's door I glanced across the common and saw men, women and even children going in and out the door, silently gesticulating and wringing their hands. It was not any personal love that they felt for Dart that caused these demonstrations, for he was not a favorite with the community, but the suddenness of his end, and the mystery that enshrouded it overwhelmed them with terror and awe, and lent to the place where his body rested a fascination that could not be resisted.

I opened the doctor's gate to deliver the result of my bootless expedition. Nancy met me at the door.

"Any news, Nancy?"

"Not a word. Did you hear anything of my poor dear child?"

"Nothing. Where is the doctor?"

"Gone out with the rest o' them, Mister Frank. Nobody could stop him. He always would have his way. If he don't find her it 'll kill him, and if he should find her *like that thing over there*, it would only be just looking at her once—that's all." And the loving nurse, housekeeper and mother, all in one, burst into tears.

I left her with a word of encouragement that I felt had little consolation in it, and went and leaned against the gate, looking across at the open door of the town-hall with a gaze that went not out toward the dead with a longing curiosity to sate itself with the swollen limbs and gaping gashes, but inward, rather, like that of a man looking into a well at the image of a living, breathing creature, that stands behind him, also looking in, but invisible.

All the past of the man, and my inseparable connection with it, rose up before me, not in dim outlines of reminiscence, but like a bitter, briny fountain smiting me in the face, stifling my breath, blinding my eyes.

What was the dead man lying yonder in his white sheet to me? In the grotesque change he has assumed I should not even know him, perhaps, if I saw him. I could see him well enough without stimulating my imagination by ghastly representations of him. He was here, he was everywhere.

My old picture gallery, that used to contain countless portraits, landscapes, historical pieces, literary ideals, fancy sketches, and the forms and brows of muses and graces incomparable in their loveliness, had undergone an unrecognizable transformation. These had all been taken down, and in their places along the gloomy walls, now without a skylight, hung innumerable em-

blems of Dart and me, representing us in every conceivable phase of our mutual history; the school days, the visits of each to the other, the confidences, the coldnesses, the reconciliations; the college days, the emulations, the rivalries, the leaps that we took across chasms where the feet of others did not venture; the jealousies that were never forgiven; later, and how fresh in my mind, the implacable hatred springing up and cropping out in that mad desire to kill me. Did the world hold nothing but the experiences of us two? Were there no stars in heaven; no rivers, no oceans, no bright romantic places upon earth? Did our personal existence make up the sum of human centres of interest and circles of motion? Was I alone in the universe with this man? Was there even no Marcella to come between us and separate us? And he was dead. I was the living chained to the dead, communing with him while shrinking from him; drawn nearer by every struggle to break away from him; to be merged with him in the same being, perhaps, in the agonies of a last effort to free myself from him!

I saw a vibration of light, which, by first disturbing ended in arousing me. It seemed to be miles off when I was made aware of it. It was unreal yet familiar, hateful yet fascinating. After all there was a third person in the world. It approached me with a stately deliberate step; deliberate yet cat-like, smiling yet tiger-like. It was Deacon Trowbridge. He had been at the town hall and was coming away. He stopped within a yard of me and bowed.

"Good morning, Mr. Everett."

How strange the name sounded to me! He had never called me anything but Frank before. When in that neighborhood I hardly knew that my name was Everett, for few persons ever reminded me of it.

"Good morning, sir," I said in a voice that sounded as if it too came from the other side of the street.

"A dreadful visitation of God. A dreadful visitation of the wrath of a just and righteous God upon a sinful and debauched people, Mr. Everett. Face

swollen and horribly mangled. A hole in the skull, made in my humble judgment by a rifle bullet, on the right temple; one on the crown made by another. Powder marks on his face."

I shuddered.

"A frightful corpse," he resumed with his eyes fastened upon mine. "A dismal, staring, bruised, purple and livid corpse. Eyes wide open. You have seen it, I suppose, Mr. Everett?"

"Not yet," I gasped.

"Not seen it! Why it has been here more than an hour. It is strange that you should stay away. I thought you were friends."

"We were once."

"Once! Oh yes, you mean while he was alive. You may well say *once*. I don't wonder that you cannot bear to look at him; it being that you were so intimate, I should think you would almost as soon face his murderer. You look pale. Your teeth chatter. I should think they would; mine would if I had loved him as you did!"

"Do you really think he was murdered, deacon?"

"What else could I think? You don't suppose that he shot himself on the top and side of his head with his own hand, do you? But you must get above this squeamishness. Somebody will put a wrong construction on it. The world is full of evil-minded persons. Come with me and look at him."

"Not for worlds."

"No? Everybody else is looking at him. I invite you as a magistrate to come along with me and examine the contusions and cuts and the holes in the scalp and give me your opinion how he came by his death. Bramble is summoning a coroner's jury now. We may want you as a witness; come."

He took hold of me to drag me after him. I hung back and struggled with him. I have an indistinct recollection of tearing one of his velvet cuffs in the scuffle. That is the last that I remember of the interview. The next thing that I knew of myself, I was lying on a sofa



in Dr. Carew's parlor. The doctor was stooping over me and chafing my temples.

"You fainted, my dear boy," he said, taking my hand tenderly and rubbing it. "You were a long time coming round. I believe trying to restore you kept me from following your example. Professional habit, don't you see? There, sit up. Smell these salts a bit. Now you are coming."

"Any news from—?" I could not say Charlotte.

"Alas, no. We have been in all her old favorite places and—searched the—I can't say that I ought to feel encouraged, but I do a little. She is not *there*," he said with a strong effort to command himself. "Not in the lake. That is what I feared. That is what took me away from home. If anybody were to find her I would rather have done it myself. If anybody—but really I begin to imagine—at any rate she isn't there—that's good as far as it goes."

As he was in need of it, I did all I could to comfort him.

"Have you ever thought that she may have gone to visit her aunt Carew in Hartford?"

"No. I cannot think she would undertake such a journey without letting me know of it. Unless there may have been some secret between her and the dead man. Yet your hint shall be followed. I will send a message to my sister at once. Charlotte is not like some girls. It is possible—barely possible"—he articulated, slowly compressing his temples with his palms. "I wish I had thought of it before, but it is a reserve force and will keep me up a few hours longer. The night would have been dreadfully tedious without it."

I rose to go.

"I'm afraid you're not strong enough to walk; let me send you home in a carriage."

"Oh no, doctor, the walk will do me good. You can't tell how much I need it to steady me."

"Stop a minute, Frank."

He went out of the room and soon returned with a glass of wine.

"Swallow that. You need it more than the walk. But in such cases the best thing to do is just what one wants to do. There."

I drank the wine and took his hand. I tried to bid him good night, but broke down. He kept hold of my hand and went with me to the gate.

"I wish I could do something for you," he said. "It comforts me so. The habit is so strong. If I were dying, I think I could live an indefinite period of time, if I were called on to prescribe for a patient. Habits are droll things. It's a pity the words virtue and vice were ever invented. Habit means all that they do and a good deal more. So Frank," he continued, stooping over the gate and looking down into my eyes, "you have spent your stock of encouragement and can't throw out so much as another straw to a—"

He could not utter the words. I saw by the twitching of his lips what he was thinking of. Indeed I could not help entertaining the same dreadful idea myself. I suppose the manner of Dart's death kept this suspicion floating in the doctor's head.

I took leave of him and started for home. I did not go by the way of Kinley Hollow. I do not think any one of my neighbors would have gone that way. The associations were too fearful and recent. It may seem strange to the reader that I neglected to call on Marcella. But it did not seem strange to me. It never occurred to me that I could. As I passed by Deacon Trowbridge's house, with my head down, hoping to avoid him, I heard him call out to me. He was standing by the garden fence apparently waiting for me.

"How do you find yourself, Mr. Everett?" he asked in a robust voice.

"Better, I thank you."

"Sudden gush of sensibility, Mr. Everett. Not surprising though. Youth is so exuberant. Friendship—hum—will break over all restraints. Seen the corpse yet?"

"No, sir."

"You'd better. It will be looked upon as strange

and will give rise to suspicions if you don't. People, especially the common people, are so jealous. They don't make allowances for eccentricities as a gentleman would. They can count on their fingers and toes all the human motives that they ever heard of. They'll never be charitable enough even to think of friendship. They never heard of Damon and Pythias, as my ancestor, the author of 'Supplicia,' called the Pope and Charles the First. I'm just going down to see if there's any change in the body within the last hour. Come!"

"Not now, I thank you. I am going home."

"Home?" echoed the deacon. "Poor Dart. He's gone home too. How dreadful! Good-bye. A good night's sleep will tone you up. Try to sleep, Mr. Everett!"

He bowed and waved his hand in the best manner of that age, when such things, with the addition of internal and external piety and good clothes, made up such a large share of the qualifications of the gentleman, and allowed me to take my leave and find my way home in the best manner I could.

When I entered the house, my mother was waiting for me. My father, she said, was still in the woods with the others who were engaged in the search. She asked me no questions about anything excepting my personal health, and soon prevailed on me to go to bed. She stayed in the room a long time fingering the vials and the glass containing the hot drink that she had made for me; smoothing down the pillow and hurrying about in a nervous way, until I shut my eyes and feigned sleep. I heard her sigh once or twice heavily, and then the flutter of her dress as she went out, closed the door and left me alone.

## CHAPTER XL.

### FOUND.

UNCLE GILBERT told off the hours so loud that night that, at times, I thought it was some one knocking at the front door. Every stroke was a tocsin.

When it came to the small hours the shock to my nerves was such that I almost jumped out of bed. At last I could endure it no longer, and at four o'clock I arose, crept down stairs, pulled the door to after me and went forth into the night. Haco followed me. He whimpered caressingly, as if he were sorry for me and at a loss how he could help me.

I had a definite purpose in going out. I went up the road to the old maple, crossed the brook and was soon lost in the pines. I began at the place where we first met Oliver fishing, and, moving along the margin of the lake, followed the indentations of the shore as well as I was able, keeping Haco close by me and letting him know by my voice and manner that I was looking for something in the water and depended on him for assistance. I threaded the sands as close to the brink as I could go, and when I came to any place where a projecting rock or precipitous crag arose out of the bosom of the lake, cutting off the ordinary approaches to the margin, I sent Haco into the water to swim along and explore these blind and to me inaccessible places, while I crawled around at the back of the interposing obstacle and met him on the other side.

There was something imposing in the appearance of Haco, as he plunged into a dark and apparently fathomless cove, where the flint ledge rose high and sheer above. I say there was something grand and harmonizing with the scene, in the sight of this huge black creature striking out for himself on a voyage of discovery, with a magnetic sensitiveness as much finer than the needles, as the powers of the will are superior to the blind forces of the elements. And what an exploration it was: the brute instinct groping to find and restore to light the wreck that human passion had scuttled and sunk:

On and on, in and out, following the curves of the water-line, shaded now by melancholy evergreens, anon glanced at by the stars as we emerged into little spaces where the open sky looked in, we crept and climbed from reach to reach of the circumference of the lake,

until we came to the bluff that was crowned by the rustic lodge described in a former chapter.

My first thought had been to let him swim across from one point to another and then to track me to the summit. But, on reflection, the shore was so bold here, and the spur shelved over the water so much that I satisfied myself Charlotte could never have accomplished the purpose I was mentally accusing her of having entertained, except by precipitating herself from the brink of the cliff into the cove. So, as my companion was in the act of launching forth again to try what he could do, I hallooed to him and called him back.

"Haco, come in!"

He oared himself about, came whimpering to the shore, shook the water out of his shaggy hair, and began to wind up the ascent in front of me without further remonstrance. We had not gone more than three hundred yards along a circuitous and most perplexing ravine, or rather series of them, running into one another at oblique angles so that the climber could not see many paces in front of him, when Haco, who was out of sight, uttered a deep cry which was multiplied many times by the hollows and turnings of the rocks. He seldom barked except when he had an important communication to make, and I knew that this alarm was to signalize some discovery. What could it be? The wolves had nearly all been exterminated from that neighborhood, and only here and there a straggler was to be found. Any game inferior to that Haco would have spurned.

The Indians, too, had long since passed away, and I could not imagine that any human being of my own race, except myself, would be likely to wander there at such an hour.

Palpitating with excitement, I pulled myself up by the vines and shrubs, and was not long in reaching the familiar paths that led to the arbor. The dog had a business-like look and manner that I could not mistake. He had struck some trail, and as soon as he saw that I was following him he eagerly pursued it. When

I reached the arbor I found him standing by a basket that was partially hidden under one of the benches.

The day was just breaking, and the grey morning twilight, gleaming through the spaces between the evergreens, was fast overcoming the darkness. I pulled the basket from its place of concealment and examined its contents: I found in it a pair of walking shoes that might have been a child's they were so small, a pair of stockings that corresponded with them, a little paper box that I had before found in the bonnet, a plain gold ring and a green veil such as was then used to screen ladies from the sun. I was interrupted in my inspection of these articles by the motions of Haco.

On that side of the lodge fronting the lake was a gradual descent of about fifty feet, which led to the verge of a precipice that hung over the water, so that a silver shilling dropped from the edge of the rock at that point would have fallen into the cove. Haco left the arbor, and, with his nose to the ground, as if tracking something, described a crooked line down to the brink of the ledge. Then he turned about and set up a howl that curdled the blood in my veins.

I followed slowly, trembling in every limb, and stooping in the imperfect light to scan, as well the thin, slippery sod that covered the skeleton of the crag, as the surface of the mosses that grew there. It was in vain. No footprints were visible.

As I came up to the little platform where the dog stood, he snuffed again at the invisible traces left upon the unimpressionable granite and uttered another cry. Then he looked mournfully in my face with that unflattering, tender frankness which must have been accorded to the brute on purpose to rebuke the duplicity of man. Instinct and reason had met here and were both at fault. I looked down into the dark waters. They were like a glass in shadow, with no quicksilver behind it. They reflected nothing, they revealed nothing. Purple on the rims of the clouds the morning flitted in the east, but it did not penetrate the mys-

teries of the cove, that looked as if no breeze had ever caught it into ripples, as if not even a stone had ever splashed upon its surface to break it into circles, nor a dry leaf fluttered down to find a grave in its bosom. Was there any approach to the foot of the precipice? I asked myself. As I glanced at the water and at the splintered shingles that lay piled up so wildly on either side of the ledge, the dog looked at me as if trying to answer the question. I pointed to the north, where the way seemed nearest and least obstructed.

"Go, look!"

Instantly he crept down a little channel to the right and advanced confidently toward a wall of granite that rose twenty feet above him. It seemed an impracticable barrier.

"Not there!"

He looked at me imploringly, ran forward to the lower edge, disappeared behind an angle, and then returned just far enough to show his head, and stopped. By this I felt sure that he knew what he was doing, and had found a pass at the corner of the rock where there was a small opening between it and another.

"Go on."

He started off and I crept after him. We kept doubling up and down in this manner, our prevailing course being always toward the lake. At length, by a sudden turn to the south, we found ourselves under the very spot where we had stood a few minutes before. A small belt of sand just on the water line extended from the northeast, abreast of the precipice, sweeping down in a beautiful curve until it was cut off by a bold projection of rock. On this ribbon of brown sand, not more than two yards wide, with the cliff leaning over me and the water stretching out beneath me, I stopped and took a survey.

There was not a mark upon the margin except those made by me and the dog. The profile of the wild shore was silent and uncompromising when I looked up at it, as the summit of the crag had been. I gazed intently into the water. I knew from the structure of

the border that it must be very deep at this point. It was with difficulty that I could see the bottom at the distance of six yards from where I was standing. By degrees my eyes became accustomed to the light, and I could penetrate a little further. I screened my face with my hand, but only a dim line that seemed to wave under the mass through which my sight pierced gropingly, separated the faintly transparent part from the blank beyond. I pulled off my hat and shaded my eyes with it, the better to intensify my vision. So I felt around with my visual sense, like a diver under a bell, breathlessly seeking and finding nothing.

By this time there was a pale light in the heavens. Did it glimmer on the surface yonder? The hemlocks and the shelf of the precipice cast shadows not to be dispelled even by the noonday sun. It must be beneath the surface then that I saw two little twinkling points of light. No pearl diver ever panted as I did, at the sight of a prize lying out of his reach on the floor of the ocean. As might happen to him, there was a stricture at my chest, and a stunning noise in my ears, as if my head had been compressed in a vise. What was it? I should die if my doubts were not resolved. Pointing to the spot I called out to Haco:

"Go fetch it."

He plunged in, swam out to the place indicated, and went down. With my hat still shading my brows, and standing on the very brink of the cove, I tried to distinguish his black shape from the black water. I was not called upon to endure the suspense long.

There was a slow upheaving of the surface. Haco reappeared, his head still under water, tugging at something. My sight might have been dimmed by the agony of the moment, or it may have been the shadows. From whatever cause, I saw but imperfectly the draped burden that came floating after him until he pulled it in and landed it at my feet.

In her death, as in her life, Charlotte Carew could not look unlovely. She lay on the sand like a water-lily by a fountain. Her eyes closed, her lips parted,



her golden hair, darkened but not tangled, drifting about her shoulders; the outlines of her figure sleep-like rather than death-like; her shining feet and ankles gently crossed; I could hardly reason myself out of the belief that she was alive. But for the little fingers clutching convulsively at the bosom and almost buried in it, the illusion would have been perfect. As it was, how ready I was to entertain it! With a trembling hand I penciled a note to my father on a bit of paper that I happened to have in my pocket, urging him to hasten with a boat, folded it and shook it at the dog.

"Take it to your master," I said thrusting it between his teeth.

He shut his jaws upon it with a snap like that of a miser's strong box, and plunged into the water again, striking out where the lake was narrow for the nearest point. I watched him till I saw him land on the opposite shore and spring into a familiar path. A human messenger might have mistaken his errand or put the letter into the wrong pocket and lost it. He might have tarried on the way or been diverted from his mission by allurements or treachery. But I knew that nothing but death could prevent this dumb courier from consummating his work.

So there I stood shivering over the features and form so lately animated by the lively graces of womanhood, so lately throbbing with pulses, and musical with pealing laughter and ringing cadences of song, myself hardly to be distinguished in my silence from her over whom I watched.

Was this the summing up of that school-girl prank-someness, that defiant restiveness under restraint, that winsome waywardness of youth and passion and hope?

A flood of light gushed over lake and cliff and sky. It was full morning. How the sunbeams glinted into the mouths of caverns, against the trunks of the trees, over the vague clouds, upon the still features of the dead.

With the light, a thought flashed upon me. I pulled

from my pocket the green veil. I found in it a crumpled paper. It was undirected and unsealed. I opened the folds dank with dew. This is a copy of it :

"DEAREST FATHER:—After I left the house this morning, I met William in the woods. He confirmed the whole story about Mr. Green. He confessed that he had known all the while the character of the man who pretended to marry us. What followed, I have not the strength to tell you. If William were with me this moment, and I had a thousand hearts, I would give them to him. If he had a thousand lives, I would take them from him if I could. We have met and parted. Oh, father, I know it will break your heart, when I tell you that you and I shall never meet again. It is evening now. All day long I have heard them hallooing for me in the woods, but I have not answered them. At daybreak I shall be asleep in the water beneath the lodge on the cliff. As soon as you read this, hurry to the collier's hut under the great tulip-tree. If you are in time you will find something that may comfort you. It is all that I have to leave you. Keep it, and cherish it for my sake. Good-bye, dearest. If you follow soon or late, carry it in your heart, that I am innocent of everything but deceiving you, and forgive me for that, if such a sin can be forgiven. I am too distracted to live, or to shudder at what I am going to do. I cannot even see the wickedness of it. My shame hides everything."

CHARLOTTE CAREW."

I read the uncertain scrawl, sentence by sentence, glancing alternately from it to the hand that had traced it.

I was called back again by the splash of oars. I looked up and saw a boat approaching with three men in it and Haco seated in the prow. My father was in the middle of the boat, and had hold of the oars. How tall and earnest he looked as the morning breeze tossed his black curling hair! What could have put that fable of Charon and the Styx into my head at such a time? I cannot tell, unless it was the energy and fidel-

ity expressed in the features and action of the man pulling at the oars. He did not even look at the wreck that lay at my feet until he had stepped upon the sand. Then he bowed himself over it and stood with his eyes riveted upon the beautiful face long and mournfully. At last he turned toward me, laid his hand on my shoulder and whispered :

"Have you learned anything else?"

I handed him Charlotte's letter. He took it gently and began to read. Soon I saw tears brimming in his eyes. He brushed them away with his hand and ran through the letter to the end. Then he spoke to the men :

"Spread out the sheet in the bow. There, that will do. Take up the body softly and wrap it in the sheet."

The men advanced awkwardly to execute the order.

"Fall back!" he said. "I forgot myself, I will do it."

He stooped down, lifted the burden, placed it in the boat, and folded the clean white linen over it.

"Push off and get into the stern," he continued, seating himself in the boat and grasping the oars again. He held them poised, turned his head about and said:

"Go to the collier's hut, Frank. I will take care of —. You had best take Haco with you. If you want anything send him to me, I shall be—. You know where I shall be!"

The water resounded sullenly to the stroke of the oars, and the little craft so freighted shot swiftly toward the opposite shore. I watched it till it disappeared behind a headland interposed between me and the village, and then, bethinking me of what I had in charge, I began to wind up the gullies between the rocks.

I lost no time in making my way to the hut, but the dog was there before me. As I bent beneath its low-browed opening, I saw the remains of a fire on the hearth at the further extremity. The night-chills had not penetrated the atmosphere within. A few brands lay smouldering on a bed of embers and sent their vapors up the wide-throated chimney. There was a

rude bed called a bunk near the fire-place and one or two benches stood against the sloping sides of the hut.

But the object that most attracted my attention was a hammock suspended from the ridge so slightly that it could hardly have been used for a collier's bed. I stepped up and looked in. Just in the middle where the sack hung lowest, was a coil of something wrapped in flannels. It was a baby asleep. It was very tiny, but very delicately and beautifully molded. I stood looking at it; afraid to stretch out my hand again lest I should awaken it. The little creature opened its eyes even while I was hesitating. I was not in the habit of handling babies, as I had been the only adventurer of that kind in my father's house. I took it tenderly in my arms.

Laden with this treasure and picking my way through the wild bushes, I took the nearest path to the village.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### LITTLE CHARLOTTE.

AS I came out of the patch of underwood by the burying ground, and caught a glimpse of the village street, I saw that it was astir with human life. So to avoid being questioned I passed around by a familiar path in the rear of the doctor's house and went into the kitchen. Nancy took the baby from my arms as soon as I made my appearance and had it away to some remote part of the house. The shutters in the parlor were closed. I stepped to the window and looked through a crevice between them. There was a group of eager faces peering over the fence. Deacon Trowbridge stood in the middle of the gateway like a picture in a frame. I shuddered at the sight of him.

Soon my father came down stairs.

"What did you find at the hut?"

I told him.

There was a long pause. How could I break it? I did.

"Does the doctor know?"

"All that I know, except the discovery of the letter and the baby."

"How does he bear it?"

"He is insensible. He has not spoken since he first saw her face. He would see it. I don't think he will ever speak again."

"Who is with him?"

"Dr. Langdon and Dr. Stanyan."

"What does Dr. Langdon say?"

"Nothing."

This dialogue ended in another long silence. Steps were heard on the stairs again and Dr. Stanyan entered the parlor. He was deeply moved and could hardly speak.

"Is there any change in the doctor?" asked my father.

"Yes. He has opened his eyes and appears to be fully aware of what has happened. He wishes to see you, Frank. Dr. Langdon thinks you had better go up to his room."

"Shall I tell him everything?"

"Everything."

The bedroom was so darkened that when I went in I could hardly discern one object from another. The patient lay upon a bed in the middle of the room, his head so propped up with pillows that he seemed to be in a sitting posture. The linen sheet folded down over his breast was scarcely whiter than the hand that rested on it. As soon as he saw me, he made a sign to Dr. Langdon, who went out.

"Come up to the bedside, Frank."

I approached and took his hand. It was cold as a stone. His manner was perfectly calm. His voice was firm, and his enunciation, though slow as if he were laboring for breath, was distinct.

"I wish to speak with you, Frank. I wish to know all the details of the discovery that you have made this

morning. You need be under no apprehension about me. I have gone through all the stages of suffering that I am capable of enduring. Nothing but a suppression of the truth could hurt me."

Thus admonished, I related the occurrences as nearly as I could in their order. He listened with entire self-composure until I came to speak of the letter. His situation had been so critical that no one had informed him of it. His whole frame trembled. With a sudden effort he sat up.

"Put more pillows under my head," he said. "Now sit down on the bed so that I can see you. Now read it—slowly."

With many painful interruptions and repetitions, I performed the task. When I had finished, he snatched the letter from my hand and tried to read it himself. His eyes were so blurred, and the writing so illegible, that he could make nothing of it."

"Fetch my spectacles from the library."

I brought them and put them on for him, but his hand shook so that he was obliged to give it up in despair. So I read the letter over and over till his mind fully grasped the contents.

"And that is all? Are you sure there is no postscript? Turn the leaf and let me see."

I showed him the next page. He examined it and shook his head.

"Just like my life, isn't it? Blank. Well, there isn't much space left to write a postscript upon. So much the easier filled. Finish your story."

I came to the hut. I told him about the child.

"Alive?" he cried with flashing eyes.

"Alive."

"What have you done with it?"

"It is here in the house."

In an instant he sprang upon the floor and caught hold of my arm.

"Show me the child; Charlotte's, Charlotte's child!"

I remonstrated. I tried to reason with him. I threatened to call Dr. Langdon. This only made him furi-

ous. His old professional contempt for the neighboring physicians blazed up in his face.

"If he comes I will turn him out of doors. The calling of him here was intermeddling, and his coming was a piece of impertinence. He knows that I have no respect for his opinion, and would not take his advice in the most trivial case. Find where the child is and take me to it or I will go alone."

Resistance would have been idle. I offered him my arm and went with him. We found the little waif asleep in a room adjoining that where its mother lay dead.

The picture of the old man, agitated, helpless, hopeless, his hair falling to his shoulders, as he stood bending over his grandchild, was heart-rending. In his bosom the fire-brands had been raked together and were smouldering upon the embers like those in the collier's hut. The infant looked in its sleep like a star on the verge of a summer heaven.

Amid the shadows of death, it sent a ray to the old man's heart. The little folded hands seemed to clasp the madness of the hour and hold it fast.

"'It is all that I have to leave you. Keep it and cherish it for my sake,'" muttered the doctor. "This was the language of her bequest. Puny little keepsake, handed over by the dead to the dying; born to flutter about in a world full of snares. I would like to take thee up in my arms, but it is better that thou should'st not open thine eyes upon me. There is a blight in my face. Good-bye, little Charlotte! Take me away, Frank."

He stooped and kissed the child, and, leaning upon me, tottered back to his chamber. It was with difficulty that he could get there. He sank exhausted upon the pillows.

"Send for Phillips," he faltered. "Tell him that my grand-daughter's name is Charlotte Carew and that she is to be my sole heir. Have him here at once to make my will. If I should die without executing it the child would be a beggar."

## CHAPTER XLII.

## FORDING THE RIVER.

DR. CAREW lay in alternating fits of stupor and nervous wakefulness until late in the afternoon. It was only when the patient was in a state of unconsciousness that Dr. Langdon ventured to go into the room.

A little before sundown the will was ready for execution, and, as it was thought dangerous to procrastinate, Dr. Stanyan, Mr. Phillips, my father and I went immediately to the sick chamber.

Dr. Stanyan was spokesman for us. He stole up to the bed and put his hand gently upon the doctor's arm.

"The paper is prepared. Can you rouse yourself and sign it now, doctor?"

"What paper?" he asked languidly, without opening his eyes.

"The will."

"What will?"

"The will that Mr. Phillips has drawn to provide for the baby. Don't you remember?"

"Whose baby?"

"Charlotte's."

Dr. Stanyan's voice choked so in uttering the word that it was scarcely audible.

"Which Charlotte?"

"Yours."

"But which? There are two. I may have dreamed it, but I thought there were three Charlottes," added the doctor with a confused stare.

"I'm afraid it is too late," whispered my father to Mr. Phillips.

"No," said the lawyer. "Leave him alone. He'll rally by and by. Think a minute, doctor," he continued; "take time to think. The first Charlotte died long ago. The second died yesterday, soon after the



third was born. It is the third that you are to provide for. Do you understand me?"

The doctor's eye kindled with a gleam of intelligence.

"For the baby that was born in the hut? Yes. That makes the third. I named it after the other two. I had it in my mind that there were three. And you say that the will is ready?"

"Yes."

"Does it give her all?"

"Yes."

"Real and personal?"

"Real and personal."

"Give me a pen."

Mr. Phillips took the big family Bible, placed it on the bed for a writing-desk, laid the will on it and the doctor signed it. Then Dr. Stanyan, my father and I set our names to it as witnesses, and Mr. Phillips after administering the oath to us, proved it. The doctor immediately settled back into a state of unconsciousness.

It was arranged that my father should go home in the evening, and that Dr. Stanyan and I should remain through the night. We were to watch with the sick man, while Dr. Langdon was to stay in the library.

Night came upon us unusually early even for that season of the year; for the last of the autumnal rainstorms was gathering and the clouds mustered forces adequate, one would have thought, to drown the earth.

By four o'clock I could hardly see to read at the window. Within an hour after that, the rain began to come down, in dashes at first, then in swoops like water-spouts, till the whole house was a roar of torrents. The wind seemed to be in all quarters of the sky at the same time, taking command of everything, giving unheard-of orders and uttering strange cries of onset.

The necromancy must have worked upon the sick man. As the dark set in, he began to moan like a child that has gone in a vain quest of its mother; and anon the evil spirits would take him and lead him

whithersoever they would. He was battling with invisible foes, in impossible situations. He was lost in caves, stemming swift streams, climbing dizzy heights and slipping from them ; battling with all the myths of Hindoo, Hebrew, Greek, and German fable ; wrestling with abstractions and philosophisms, praying for annihilation and hiding from the terrors of immortality. When he raved it was almost impossible to keep him in bed. In his intervals of relaxation, there was hardly a sign of life in him. For several hours Dr. Stanyan and I were in such alternate struggles with him and conditions of apprehension about him lest he should never come to himself again, that we were in a state hardly more normal than he. The gusts of the storm without were not farther removed from the ordinary bounds of nature, than were those of the mental and moral world within from the common limitations of spiritual laws. How vividly it recalled to mind the thunder-storm at Mr. Barker's during the anxious night that I spent with my mother.

A little after daybreak the doctor called out :

"Help me up, Stanyan. It is time to go."

"Where?"

"To bid Charlotte good-bye."

"Don't you know she is dead?"

"No matter. I must say good-bye all the same."

"But you are very feeble. It would make you worse."

"No, it will make me better. There is no time to lose. Come."

"What do you think?" asked Dr. Stanyan of me.

"He will be wild if we thwart him," I whispered.

"Let him have his way."

"Very well, doctor," said Dr. Stanyan. "Shall Frank go with us?"

"Yes. Bear a hand, both of you."

We lifted him up and each gave him an arm. Supported thus he walked tottering across the bed-room, through the hall and stopped at the door of the death-chamber. I opened it and we went in. As we did so,

I saw the shadow of a familiar figure flitting along the wall and disappearing behind the door that led into an adjoining apartment. Why did it retreat from me? My jealous heart conjured up strange conjectures. Could I answer them? Or was it the shape of some one else?

Shrouded with white linen, the corpse lay upon a pillowless bed. How tall and ghastly the chief mourner looked as he stood in his night-gown leaning over the ruin. Dr. Stanyan lifted the face-cloth. Two candles from tall candlesticks placed near the head of the bed, shed a pale light over the white forehead, leaving the cheek nearest to us in shadow. Her hair clustered around her neck as I had so often seen it in life, and her lips had a sensitive curve full of plaintive supplication, as if imploring help to find something that was lost.

Dr. Carew looked at the face long and intently with a sad stillness more eloquent than speech. Then he put his hand on the brow and passed his fingers lightly over the hair that half hid the temples. The expression of his features took that of the sleeper, and seemed like hers silently to pray for help. Then he spoke. Shall I call it prophesying or invocation?

"You could not find what you sought here, Charlotte, and you have gone to look for it elsewhere. The world will blame you for this step and for the causes that led to it. In your trail of light you have left a braid of darkness; but perfect vision pierces all darkness. The stars are always shining, though the vapors of earth may hide them. I shall go in search of you, my child. Where in all this wilderness of worlds I shall find you, I know not; but if you have left any foot-prints that affinity can trace into the unknown and illimitable, I shall find them out, and in looking for you I shall also find your mother. Whatever estate may be assigned to you and her will satisfy my longings and make a home good enough for me."

Then he laid his hand on Dr. Stanyan's shoulders and said:

"I put the character of my child and the life of my grandchild in your keeping. Take care of both. I have not always followed your advice, Stanyan, but I have learned from you to put my faith in Christ. If he was not God, he was God enough for me. He supplies every want and fills every aspiration. I could never have looked upon the sun had it not been tempered by the eclipse. The end has come now. It is dark, but it is the end."

"It is the beginning," said the clergyman. "Look up. Keep looking up."

"Yes, Stanyan, I understand. I have read the travels of Christian and Hopeful lately. I told you I would and I did."

"Yes, doctor,—even from the peaks of the Delectable Mountains they looked upward."

"It better suits me to think of them looking up from the dungeons of Doubting Castle and from the depths of the last river that they crossed," said Dr. Carew with a faint smile. "If you carry that key about you called 'Promise,' Stanyan, and you and Frank can help me to get down upon my knees, I would like to have you try it. It *might fit*; at any rate you could try it."

"I feel it in my bosom," replied the minister.

So Dr. Stanyan and I steadied the knees of the man and set his face toward the gate. The hinges creaked, the door swung open. The rest of the journey even to the middle of the river was transient and easy.

"Do the waves go over thee?" asked the minister.

"I feel the bottom and it is good," replied the pilgrim. So he got over; and so on the banks of the stream we saw another tenantless ruin with crumbling towers and leaning battlements; but the light of the morning played upon it, and the waters went murmuring by with scarcely audible whispers of death.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## THREE FUNERALS.

ON the morning of the day appointed for the burial of our dead, I was agitated by such a conflict of attractions and repulsions that I had much ado to determine how to dispose of myself. Dr. Carew and Charlotte were to be buried in the morning and William in the afternoon. I was irresistibly drawn toward the first ceremonial, but the very thought of the other was horrible to me. I deliberated until the preparatory bell rang for the morning service, and then I made up my mind what I would do. As I passed by the burying ground I saw the men busy digging a grave for William in one corner of Deacon Trowbridge's enclosure. Why did they not put the dead man in Dr. Stanyan's lot with the other students who had died away from home, while under his charge? There were several such graves in that lot. There was room for more.

The funeral of the doctor and his daughter was to be had at the house of the deceased, and as I was a kinsman of theirs, I was invited into the room occupied by the mourners, which opened into the hall where the two coffins were already placed. When I went into the room I found it filled with the relatives of the family. The smell of black crape stifled me. Tearful faces were hidden behind motionless hands and convulsive sobs filled the house. I sat down on a bench in the middle of the room facing the coffins. Weird as they looked in that house whence the former inmates were so soon to be borne, they had a strange fascination for me. So I kept looking first at one, then at the other; counting the screws, examining the handles, tracing the grains of the mahogany in its windings along the board and across it, telling the rungs and legs of the chairs that supported the dead, and casting unsatisfied glances about the apartment where I sat, from veil to bonnet, without associating (so far as I

was aware) any article of apparel with any living person. Still I must have been seeking some one, for after allowing my eyes to wander over the whole group in front and on either side of me, I began to turn myself uneasily on the bench and look over my shoulder. A suppressed sigh, that must have come from an over-charged heart, arrested my attention. A dress rustled behind me. I knew that Marcella was there and felt that she was looking at me. With nervous agony I writhed in my seat. What could she be thinking about? I asked myself. The waterfall rose before me with the Iris spanning it. The two figures stood on the rock looking down into the pool. I saw the pine waving above them. I saw them turn to climb the slanting stairs, half hid by the laurel leaves, and slowly disappear behind a pinnacle of the crag. The words of Marcella's warning came into my mind with the very intonation in which it was uttered. The impression was so overwhelming that I felt a mad impulse to cry out and rush into the street. A careless little sparrow flitted in at the window and alighted upon my head. The fluttering of its timid wings in my hair brought me to my feet. I looked around; Marcella's eyes were mournfully fixed upon me. Their light smote me blind. I wavered and sank back into my seat. What the funeral services were I knew not. I neither saw nor heard anything. I can only recall the spectacle of the mourners in the hall moving round the coffins in a circle, each one stopping a moment to take a last look at the features of the dead. Then I found myself in the procession. After that we all stood in a large circle, Marcella gazing at me across the two graves. When I came to myself I was alone.

I slunk away and hid myself in the forest. I wandered there for hours, lost, yet with a certain undertone of consciousness, so that I did not lose sight of the coming on of the evening shadows. The hour designated for the other funeral was approaching. I looked at my watch. It was half-past three o'clock. I wound in and out of the copses until I came within a few rods

of the burying ground fence. With much care I selected for my post of observation, a high moss-covered rock that stood behind a wild-looking weather-worn cedar, cumbered with a grape-vine that rambled all over it and would have strangled it, had it not been endued with a centennial vitality that called for a centennial decay. The openings between the foliage were so small that no one could see through them from below, but large enough to afford me a good outlook, and the height commanded the Trowbridge lot in the burying ground. I could even see the open grave. It was not long before the funeral train began to wind up the hill. The throng of attendants was more than twice as large as that present at the burial in the morning. So much do the demands of curiosity overtop those of sympathy. The gate of the Trowbridge lot was open, and the table monuments of the eldest male members of the line, and the upright stones marking the resting places of their younger children gleamed faintly in the distance. Only a small part of the company could get into the enclosure, and those who remained outside crowded close against the rails and looked over them. I could not see the expression of their faces, but their attitudes indicated the most eager interest. Why did I lurk thus from their sight? Had I no sympathy to bestow, no curiosity to gratify? Was this man among strangers, a stranger to me? Or if there existed no connecting link between him and me, why did I hover like a bird of ill omen about his grave? I watched every step of the funeral rite from beginning to end. I saw the gate close upon the dead; I saw the last retreating figure moving in the light of the setting sun as it glimmered through the copper-colored clouds. Then a chill crept over me. The cedar must have been conscious of its influence, for the wind wailed through its boughs, and, as the twilight settled over it, its leaves grew black as night.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## THE ARREST.

I HAD not gone many rods on my way homeward when I heard a man call out to me from the thicket. "Stop a minute, Mr. Frank."

It was Oliver Bramble. He stepped abruptly into the path and stood waiting for me to come up with him.

"Come this way; I want ter speak tew ye."

He turned and struck out into a by-path that led toward the house. I followed. Soon we came to a flat rock covered with yellow moss.

"Set deown here," he said.

"What do you want to say to me, Oliver?"

"I've got suthin' t' read ter ye. Ef it hurts yer feelins more'n it does mine, yew'll be putty apt ter die. That's th' way on it. Oh, dear! that I should a' ben beorn ter th' disgrace of bein' a consterble an' takin an oath ter dew the like o' this."

"Read it, Oliver."

"Read it! Think its a newspaper, doan't ye? I wish I was dead! There!"

"Whatever it is, Oliver, you are not to blame for doing your duty. Read it out."

"Arter all ez yer father's done for me, an' th' stockin'-yarn ez yer mother's gin to Sally, an' arter all th' odd turns ez I'm beholden ter yew for! Death ain't no punishment neow. Oh, Mr. Frank!"

"Don't torment me with lamentations, Oliver. Read it."

He began, but soon broke down. I caught the paper out of his hands and read it aloud in a firm voice. It was an information and warrant to arrest me for the murder of William Dart. Oliver looked on with tears in his eyes, in utter amazement at my self-possession.

"I knew 'twas a nasty lie of Deacon Trowbridge's," he said, when I had finished reading and returned the



paper to him. "I knew it. He ain't satisfied with what blood's ben spilt; he wants ter spill more."

"Did Deacon Trowbridge hand you this process to serve?"

"Course. Who else?"

"Where-are you going to take me?"

"Jest where yer say, Mr. Frank."

"That will never do, Oliver. I am not a party to be consulted. Take me wherever it is safest and best for you. I have only one request to make. Unless your orders are peremptory, don't take me to my father's; at least, not until I have had time to send word to my mother. I'm afraid it would kill her."

"Would ye mind goin' tew my heouse? 'Taint fit for a gentleman to sleep in, but Sally'll give ye th' best bed."

"I should like best of all to go there," I said.

We walked along, he a little in advance of me, removing the bushes from my path and selecting the shortest line that led to his house. There was fellowship of feeling enough existing between us to have induced conversation, but it was a fellowship that spent itself inwardly and had nothing to squander upon expression. A stranger observing us would have imagined that if either of us were a prisoner, it must be the little crooked man before me, stooping along with his head bent almost to the earth. Poor fellow! if he did not suffer as acutely as I did, it was at least in a way that made him a more pitiable object to look at.

When he came in sight of his hut he found it impossible any longer to repress his feelings.

"It's tew deep fer me. I can't hack threw that shuck. Most everything is shuck in this world. Sum nuts is all shucks, no karnel in 'em. There's th'ology—that's a ches'nut with pricklers on it so ez yew can't tech it. When yer break threw, half th' time there's worms in it. There's fed'ralism—that's a last year's ches'nut; harder'n flint an' peowder-posted; lies like a bullet on yer stummick. There's de-mocrisy. That's a green but'nut; th' jewse stains yer hands an' flies inter

yer eyes when ye try ter crack it; ain't no substance in th' meat. If paradventer thar happens tew be anythin' inside o' th' shucks it's more'n its wuth ter find it. Dunno what's fit ter eat when ye see it tiil ye try. Half on it's wind, an' t'other half's bitter ez pi'kery. I'm guilty, an' yew git punished for't. That's heow it goes. I wish I was dead. Whew!"

"You talk like a fool, Oliver. You are not to blame for arresting me. You are a constable."

"Yes, I be ter blame. I feel ez guilty ez an Injin for bein' born. P'raps I cudn't hev helped it, but I orter 'a tried. I might 'a helped bein' a constable. I allers wanted suthin' I hadn't orter hev. Some durned edge tool ez I didn't know heow ter yeuse. When I went for't I allers got hold on't edge fust and cut myself, or let it fly eout o' my hand when I was a-swingin' it, an' brain somebody. I've allers ben a muskit ez hez killed wus by kickin' 'n other pieces dew with th' muzzle. It's ez much ez a man's life's wuth to fire me off, an' every time I venter tew dew it, I knock myself clean over. Lead us not int' temptation! Ef I had a quart o' winkum neow I shu'd drink it without stoppin' ter draw breath."

His tenderness of sentiment, and his ludicrous way of charging the blame of my situation upon himself, presented such a droll contrast that I could not forbear laughing even under the pressure of my misfortunes. In trying to comfort him I struck some hidden centre of sensibility in him, and he broke out again in a new strain of self-accusation.

"I allers make a mess o' everythin' as I tech. I mix myself up so with other folks ez I can't tell one from 'tother. I hed a sand-hill crane once ez I brought from eout West. I put him in amongst t' hens an' turkeys an' geese, and he lived with 'em till bimeby his idees got confused, an' he thort he was one on 'em. He clucked and gobbled and sissed, an' forgot all about bein' a crane. He addled more hens' eggs 'n his durned neck was wuth a-tryin' ter hatch 'em eout. It's jest so with me. I'm allers tryin' to set on other

feowls' eggs. My hull life's like an angle-worm cut in tew: eyther end o' th' beast's stun blind an' crawlin' abeout ter find t'other end. But the pieces doan't never splice. Whew!"

When we reached the house it was dark. My reception was as hearty as I could have wished. Sally flew about and did everything that was necessary for my comfort.

It was clear enough that I had lost nothing in her estimation. She prepared me a nice supper and made up the bed in the spare room, and in all respects "fixed me up," to use her own words, as well as she could. Although she said nothing about it, I could plainly see how sorry she was for me.

Her grandmother had been a servant in the house of the Rev. Jonathan Everett, and loyalty to the Everetts had been "foreordained" to run in Sally's veins.

With Oliver it was different. His loyalty grew out of the elective affinities. Perhaps natural selection might be a better term to use now-a-days.

Sally accepted the Everetts very much as Mrs. Barker did her husband. To be an Everett, in Sally's estimation, was to be everything. Oliver was irresistibly drawn toward us by internal promptings. He spent his religious sentiment on my father and worshipped him. On me he lavished his dog instincts in a servitude so self-exacting that it amounted to a tyranny. The struggle between duty and affection in the present situation of affairs was to the last degree perplexing to him. Even then, demonstrative as he was, I was only half aware of his sufferings. I found out afterward what he meant by his frequent repetition of the words "Lead us not into temptation." He was tempted to let me escape.

While I was eating my supper, the whole family sat with their heads down, scarcely looking at me or one another, and not breaking the silence by so much as a whisper. Even the red-haired girls were subdued for once. Tom's conduct, however, was very strange. He kept staring at me in a bewildered manner, and wring-

ing his hands as if he were enduring insupportable mental agonies. When I had finished my supper I walked toward the fire. The cat had taken possession of the only vacant chair.

"Scat! ye black bitch!" said Oliver, boxing her ears.

"Let her be, Oliver," cried Sally, with some spirit, taking up the abused animal and stroking its back.

"Taint no yeuse, kos we're in trouble, tormentin' a cat ez has got a litter of six young kittens. 'Twunt help us none."

"It's a comfort to me ter hurt suthin'. I shud like to a dreown'd th' hull seven on 'em," answered Oliver, spitefully.

I sat awhile musing. The old spirit of self-control, that used to take possession of me in my college days when pressed my difficult circumstances, came to my relief at last.

"Oliver, can you send Tom to do a message for me?"

"Where?"

"To my father's."

"Doant dew it. Wait till mornin'. Must sleep. Die ef ye doant. Yew know what ye said 'bout killin' yer mother. Neow, I beg?"

"I only wish to send to my father."

"Jest ez bad. It's wus. He'll suffer ez ef he hed a hull tribe o' Injuns a shutin' arrers inter him. I know him. He's kinder savage outside, but he's an angel inside. I cudn't stan' it ter night. Ef I cud go an' break it tew him myself it might dew, but Tom's so awk'rd an' got sech big sprawlin' feet, he'll step on somebody's feelin's an' smash 'em. Cudn't help it no more'n he cud help boltin' his vittles."

"He must go, Oliver," I said, rising. "There's no help for it. I know just what I want to have done, and you must let me take my own way of doing it."

"What's he ter say?"

"He must tell my father that I am here, and wish to see him this evening."

"Git up, Tom. Understand? Yew're ter say jest what yew're told tew—no more—no less. You're not

ter step on things. Yew're not tew go crunchin' every fleower an' green yarb inter th' greound. Neow b'off. Say as Mr. Frank wants ter see him, an' say nuthin' else. Neow make tracks."

Tom started off without his hat.

"Put suthin' on. Yew ain't a goin' bareheaded. I can't pay no more doctor's bills for ye. Ef I cud, we ain't got no doctor," said Oliver, pathetically.

Tom put on his hat and went out.

During his absence we all sat looking at the fire in silence. Even the audacity of the black cat in crawling up into my lap went unrebuked. It seemed a very short time before my father arrived. He came in without knocking. He walked up to me and stood looking down upon me. I tried to look up at him. In the uncertain light of the fire his figure assumed gigantic proportions, and I fancied that his head was towering above the ceiling. I rose up and took his hand.

"Sally, fetch me a candle," he said, "and show us a private room."

Sally brought a light, and led the way into the bedroom that she had got ready for me. My father took the candle from her hand, and I followed. He shut the door, and we stood face to face. He held up the light and scrutinized me keenly.

"You are very pale," he said. "What is the matter with you?"

"I am under arrest for the murder of William Dart."

He dropped the candle from his hand. I caught it up before it was extinguished, and, in my turn, held it toward him, and looked steadily into his eyes that were again fixed on mine in a long, wondering gaze. His features relaxed.

"You are not guilty," he said. "I know it could not be. Tell me that you are not guilty, and I will believe it."

"I am not guilty of murder, father."

"Tell me all you know about it," he said fiercely, stamping his foot upon the floor. "Keep nothing back."

I gave him the details of my connection with this mournful affair. He listened without taking his eyes from me, or moving a muscle of his face until I had concluded.

"Why have you kept it from me so long? Why did you not proclaim it at once. Such a secret is a coal of fire. It consumes the bosom that hides it?"

"I cannot tell why. Perhaps it was because it was a coal of fire that I tried to smother it. The struggle with Dart was desperate, the peril of my own life fearfully imminent. I was wild with the madness of the excitement, with the shock to my nerves, the terrible apprehension and more terrible reaction, the discharge of the pistol, the suddenness of the plunge, the whirling and roaring of the stream, the death of Charlotte, the discovery of the child. Father, I cannot tell you why I kept the secret, but before God I am innocent."

"Still such secrets are so dangerous to keep," he said. "So hard to explain if not explained at once. The world is so uncharitable—the truth is so difficult to search out—even the simplest truth."

There was something about this sturdy landholder, whose whole life had been spent in caring for the details of a farm, that distinguished him from his neighbors. With an education very imperfect, except in the great matters relating to the next world, he associated with his rugged manner a predominant tone derived from the old English manor lords and the New England clergy, more effective than any dash of chivalry.

"Frank," he said solemnly, "in the Heaven of Heavens there is a judge. His court is always in session. It is a High Court of Appeals. Not even the angels, except, perhaps, the recording angel, know anything of its decrees, and it is quite likely that even he does not understand everything that he records. Carry your case up. Let earthly tribunals decide what they will, carry it up." He stepped to the door and opened it.

"Oliver, come in."

The constable came stooping toward my father.

"Oliver, can you send Tom upon another errand?"

"Anywhere you like. Say the word, sir."

"Tell him to go to the Valley, and have Mr. Phillips here by six o'clock to-morrow morning. He is to say that I want to see him on a matter of the greatest importance."

"I'll dew it, sir."

"Now, Frank," said my father, "I must go to your mother. Try to sleep, and mind, don't wait for the verdict of a jury; take your appeal at once. Good-night."

## CHAPTER XLV.

### DESMOTES.

AT the appointed hour next morning Mr. Phillips and my father came. I was still in bed when they entered my room. My father shook hands with me, and asked me how I had passed the night. I would have inquired after my mother, but I could not pluck up a spirit to do it.

"I will leave you alone with Mr. Phillips," said he.

As soon as he was gone the lawyer sat down by the side of the bed and began to question me about my former relations with William. I began at the beginning, and went through the whole time covered by our intimacy, omitting no rivalries or jealousies, and not even blinking at the challenge and my answer to it. He listened to the narrative with keen attention.

"This brings us down to the morning of the day when Dart disappeared," he said, when I had concluded, "Your father has asked you to disclose everything that happened after that?"

"Yes, I am willing to tell it to you, and to the whole world."

"Don't be in a hurry. I'm thinking. On the whole, I will hear all that you choose to tell. Now go on."

I gave him a minute history of that eventful day, from the moment when I left my father's house until I returned to it. My statement must have been singu-

larly clear, for he did not interrupt me with a question, nor did he appear to breathe until I had completed it. Then he told me to begin again and repeat it. I did so in nearly the same terms, and with the same particularity.

The preliminary examination was to be had the next morning before Deacon Trowbridge.

When my father came back into the room Mr. Phillips said :

"Well, deacon, I have been talking with Frank about the case, and have made up my mind what to do. As for the trial before the magistrate, it is a foregone conclusion."

"You mean that he will be bound over?"

"I mean that, guilty or innocent, he will be committed. Trowbridge is your deadly enemy, and he will not let this opportunity slip."

"And I must look for bail?"

"Don't you know, deacon, that murder is not aailable offense?"

"And he will be locked up in jail?"

"Yes," whispered Mr. Phillips, with a painful twitch of the muscles of his face. "Locked up. But what I was going to say is this: I have made up my mind to offer no evidence before the magistrate."

"Has Frank told you anything?"

"Everything," said Mr. Phillips. "Filer will appear for the prosecution. Let him offer whatever proof he can find in behalf of the state. I will take it down word for word and let the justice do whatever he likes. Then I shall know what the public can prove, and on that I will build my defence."

In the consideration of what was to be done and what was left undone, I saw that I was not consulted. Had I been absent and indifferent to the issue, I could not have been more thoroughly overlooked.

When they were about to take leave of me, my father could not command himself. He kept walking in little narrow circles and drawing nearer and nearer to the bed. He stooped down and whispered in my ear:



"When your mother comes to see you, my son, I shall not be present. Make the burden as light to her as you can."

They soon took their leave of me. I remained alone nearly an hour. I have not the heart to attempt to describe the interview with my mother. Toward night I ordered a fire to be made in my room and lighted candles to be placed on the little table in the chimney corner. Through the whole day I had indulged my old fancy of lying in bed and watching the current of my own imaginations as it went whirling down. I used to call it a cataract. How many nights has it kept me awake with the roar and jumble that it made in my ears! It is not so turbulent as it used to be. The limestone walls are a good deal worn away by the attrition of the water, and it is now more like a succession of rapids and pools; but sometimes even yet it makes my eyes unsteady to look at it as it goes tossing on and over into a deep that I cannot fathom.

On this occasion I arose and dressed myself by the light of the candles and the yellow flame of the pine and oak logs. I tried to make out as well as I could the windings of the way that I was to take, and to figure to myself how the place would look whither I was going.

Evening had set in wild and gusty but with no threat of rain. I had all day long entertained as unbidden guests, visions of the Prometheus Desmotes; and now as I looked into the fire, they took every imaginable shape. The Indian Caucasus; the up-piled crags glittering with ice; the sea, that ever changing shadow of heaven; the weird glaciers shining in the frosty air, took vaster proportions than they had worn by day. Æschylus had always bewitched me more than any other of the old dramatists and of all his creations the Desmotes was the most enchanting. I had a pocket copy of this drama, that Dr. Carew had brought from Leipsic, and had in my early Grecian days presented to me. I knew the text almost by heart. I pulled it out, snuffed the candle, and began to read. I read slowly and repeti-

tiously, all the while framing in my mind a similitude between the fate of the Desmotes and my own miserable doom. Instead of taking my appeal to Heaven, as my father advised, I took it to the Chorus, that intangible representative of a just popular sentiment which stands not for one age but for all ages. As I went on, bitter thoughts kept gushing up into jets of salt spray and falling around me in fetters of ice. Was it a sense of wrong, or was it self-pity that goaded me to recite aloud that memorable passage, which the stiff fingers of English language can never hold.

"Verily hereafter the chief of the immortals shall have need of me; although bound in chains, I suffer shame. He shall need me to make known to him the new plot that is to beguile him of his royalties. But he shall not win me over by the charms of persuasion, nor will I ever, crouching at his feet, make such a disclosure, until the shackles shall have been stricken from my limbs and redress made to me for this wrong."

Thus I tried to slake my thirst at the brackish well of fiction, and lost myself in the involutions of accusation and justification, till I could make nothing of my condition. The noises gradually died out in the kitchen as one after another of the family retired to rest, and at last I was left alone with Prometheus on the Caucasian ridge, the vulture flapping at my heart, and the ice-cold wind stiffening my cheeks as it wailed along the mountain. The blaze died out between the jambs, and the gusts of wind, as they swept fitfully up the chimney, drove the filmy white ashes from the embers and kept them aglow. Then the shadows of Caucasus faded from them, and vanished. Simultaneously with the clock striking eleven, I thought I heard a light rap at the kitchen door. I listened. It was repeated with a more assured pulsation. Even the blast outside did not draw this little supplicating summons into the wide volume of its utterance. I arose and was starting for the door when I distinguished Oliver's voice in the passage:

"Who be yew?"

If there was any answer it was too faint for him to catch, for again he called out in a louder tone:

"I say, who be yew?"

Still I could hear no answer. He went to the door and unbolted it. I heard it open and felt a wave of night-wind go suddenly through the house. I had no difficulty in making out the following conversation. So keenly alive were my senses they could have heard it had it been whispered.

"I can't. Instructions confin'd ter th' famerly an' ceownsel, petick'ler. Oath of office doant ye know? Whew!"

"But, Oliver, I must see him. It can do no harm. I will keep it a secret as long as I live."

"But what'll come of my promise? I haint got no large cap'tal in trade with thet—an' without it I'm poorer'n pikery. My Christian character'd suffer ef I should tell a lie. It's putty shacklin' neow."

"Oliver! Do you think I would help him to escape? Do you think so meanly of him as to believe he would escape if he could?"

"*Non est ventus*" 'ud look awk'rd on th' back o' th' process. But no, I doant think 'twould be wus'n my tellin' an' eout an' eout lie. Taint perjury! I doant think he'd run. Ef I wus sure he'd dew it. He orte. I wish he wud. You're a temptin' on me by bein' so handsome an' cryin' so. I'm a chokin' up tew. Ef I cud rot in jail ten year an' make it all clear to my conscience, I'd dew it. Ef I wus told that Sally an' Tom an' my red-headed gals hed all died of a bilious fever, an' I wus ter be struck by lightnin' th' next minute—it wud make me feel kind o' cheerful. Oh, Lord, lead us not inter temptation."

At this stage of the dialogue I walked into the entry. Oliver stepped aside for me as if surrendering to me the figure in the dark cloak that was standing near the door. I clasped it, not in my arms, but in the embraces of my soul.

"Will you stand guard at the door?" cried Marcella, "and let Frank and me go into this room a minute? Only a little minute, Oliver?"

"Dew what ye like," said Oliver, settling back against the wall and bursting into a fit of vehement weeping such as is sometimes exhibited by simple-hearted grown-up children. "Dew whatever ye like, go wherever ye like. Ef God disapproves of what I'm a-lettin' ye dew, I can't help it. I'll take my chances on it. Run away, Mr. Frank. Anythin' ez Deacon Zalmon says 'taint lawful ter dew, there must be scrip-ter fer dewin'. Run away. I'll take my chances on 't."

I led the way into my room.

"I expected you would shrink from me, Marcella. It is natural that you should."

"Is it equally natural that I should come here at such an hour as this to visit you?"

With these words Marcella rushed across the room, sank down in one of the two chairs with which I had been provided, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a passionate fit of grief. I hurried forward and tried to soothe her. It would have been as easy to hush the wind that shook the cottage walls.

"Oh, William, William!" she cried in a piteous wail that pierced my heart like a dagger. "Oh, Frank, what have you done, how could you have the heart to do it? Did I not warn you, did I not intreat you to spare me, to spare yourself this horrible misery. Is this the love with which you pursued me—is this the homage that you would lay at my feet? Dead, dead—and such a death—so much more hideous than my imagination could picture—than my dreams could foreshadow! And you, whom I sought to protect from him—that you should be the pursuer and he the victim! Oh, my God, was there not enough of sorrow before, but new depths of anguish should be opened up to me such as the future can never, never fathom!"

"Marcella!" I cried, "listen to me before you condemn me."

I could not stem the torrent of her overwhelming sorrow. I do not think she even heard my words.

"I thought I had plucked out the love of William

Dart with my heart-strings," she continued, "but they bleed with his blood and quiver with his wounds. Was there not some other—some more merciful way to kill him—some secret deadly poison that could satisfy your revenge without blasting my eyes with this horrible spectacle?"

I threw myself on my knees before her, caught hold of her hands, pulled them away from her face and held them fast.

"You *shall* hear me, Marcella. Your mind is abused with vain suspicions. I will not be put by with false accusations. I am innocent of this crime."

She looked at me with wide flashing eyes.

"Innocent! Did you not kill him, then? Were you not with him on the ledge? Was not your rifle found there the next morning? Was not his head pierced with bullets? Frank, I have always found you a truth-telling boy. I came here on purpose to hear your story. But I was suddenly blinded by my misery. I am willing to do you justice—you and William—speak, I will listen."

I released her hands, and again went through the dreary wilderness of experiences that already seemed more remote from me than the creation of the world. Her attention faltered a good deal, but she tried faithfully to follow me, and at last, with frequent repetitions on my part, she triumphed over suspicion and grief, and mastered my defence in all its details. When I had finished, she said:

"Forgive me, Frank. I have done you a great wrong. I do not wish to sacrifice you to my wretchedness. Good-bye, and may God send you a safe deliverance. From this time forth nothing shall shake my faith in your innocence—unless—unless—I should lose my faith in my God."

Then she left me. In a moment I heard Oliver's voice in the entry:

"'Taint no yewse. I'm a' goin' hum with yew. Ef he runs away while I'm gone let 'em hang th' consterble."

When the outer door closed I sat down in the

chair that my visitor had just left, pressed my hands hard against my temples and tried to bring myself back to consciousness. I could not even establish my own identity. Was I the Prometheus, and was the vision that had dawned on me in the shape of Marcella one of those winged creatures with sad eyes and wild features that came to comfort the desolate god? I stooped and picked up the Desmotes that had fallen to the floor. I put it into my pocket without so much as looking at it.

When I awoke, the sun had melted the ice from the Caucasian cliff.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### COMMITTED.

THE preliminary examination resulted as Mr. Phillips had predicted. The court was held at the town hall, where the body of William had lain before burial, a spectacle to the same crowd that now came to stare at me. Deacon Trowbridge presided, assisted by two Justices of the Peace from a neighboring town in the county. He was decorated with all the grandeurs that the age of small clothes could lend him. I well remember how portly and unassailable he looked, and how much above the entertaining of sympathy and other kindred weaknesses he seemed.

With the exception of the magistrates, the counsel, the accused, and three or four principal gentlemen, the whole company present was obliged to stand, and almost every square inch of the floor was occupied.

Mr. Filer wore an air of bland satisfaction more vulgar indeed than the pert indifference of Mr. Swift, but less loathsome to me. Mr. Swift was understood to be in attendance for the purpose of looking up evidence. Before the proceedings commenced he hobbled in quite out of breath and heated with drink, and took a seat next to Mr. Barker. He sat a few moments and then

turned and addressed some remark to my grandfather. I could not make out what it was, but the subject matter was made pretty clear by the reply of Mr. Barker.

"You drank up all I had when you were beating the bush against Stanyan. You might as well understand our relative positions. You were here doing dirty work then and you are doing it now. You would perjure yourself for a glass of grog. I could hire you to do it. Now, mind, if you ever go inside my gate again you'll want *three* crutches to carry away what's left of you. I detest cripples. They hate God because He made them crooked, and they hate other men because He made them straight."

"Gentlemen will preserve order," said Deacon Trowbridge authoritatively.

"So I will," said Mr. Barker, "if I am let alone ; but if he gives me another word of impertinence I'll make an example of him."

Deacon Trowbridge was smarting under Mr. Barker's award in the arbitration that settled the title to the parsonage, and as it was now his hour of triumph, it was not to be expected that he would endure everything. He bristled with official perturbation.

"Silence, Mr. Barker, or I'll commit you for contempt."

"You had better do it," retorted Mr. Barker, flourishing his stick. "But there is one thing you had better not try to do. You'd better not provoke me into an explanation of motives. There will be more cripples than one here, if you do."

His face was so swarthy, his eyes sparkled so with anger, and the motion that he made with his cane was so belligerent, that I looked for nothing but an assault upon the deacon in open court. Although the high sheriff was present it would have required more force than he could muster to put the old gentleman under arrest, for he was very popular always in the habit of having his own way, and the sympathies of the people were with me.

It was fortunate that Mr. Phillips was present to in-

terfere. He walked up to Mr. Barker, whispered a word in his ear, and the old gentleman instantly subsided. But he kept looking unutterable defiance at the court throughout the whole trial.

The investigation did not last long. The decencies of justice were barely preserved. The evidence was all circumstantial, and was hurried over in a galloping way not creditable to the court. Mr. I hillips took full notes of the testimony and only asked such questions as were necessary.

Within two hours from the time when the first witness was called, I had shaken hands with the friends and neighbors who gathered about me to bid me good-bye and was on my way to the county jail. I rode in the carriage of the high sheriff and on the same seat with him. Neither of us spoke a word during the journey.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### WHERE SHALL WE PUT HIM.

**I**N those days we used to call the jail "the County House." This grew partly out of a kindly feeling for those unfortunates who were imprisoned there, and partly out of the fact that the jailor kept a house of public entertainment under the same roof.

When we reached our destination, the jailor met us at the door.

The County House was a three-story brick structure, situated on the brow of the hill, at the eastern extremity of the village. The "entertainment" branch of the business was carried on in the front part of the building and the rear was occupied by the prisoners.

"Where shall we put him?" asked the keeper.

"Middle cell, second story," answered the sheriff.

"Come with me, please," said the subaltern.

I followed the jailor to the end of the hall. He pulled a key from his pocket and opened the grated



door. We entered the area. On the opposite side of it were the cells, two tiers of them, one above the other, stretching the entire length of the edifice. By the light of the lamp I counted them. There were thirteen above and thirteen below. He led the way by the creaking wooden stairs. I remember indulging a curious doubt while we were going up whether they might not fall and crush us on the pavement below.

My guide stopped at the seventh door and opened it with another key. My room was about six feet wide and eight feet deep, with a window at the further end. There was a narrow bed in it, a chair, and a little stand ornamented with a dip candle in the tall iron candlestick and a greasy dog-eared Bible.

"If you find it close here you can raise the window a bit."

"Thank you."

"Do you want anything?"

"No."

"Snug, isn't it?"

"Very."

"If you should be cold before morning you'll find an extra blanket under the crib."

"Yes."

"Good night."

"Good night."

The man groped down stairs. The area locks grated, the door creaked and closed with a thud and the prison was in utter darkness. Whether it resulted from fatigue or whether the mould of the jail walls, so stifling to my lungs at first, acted upon my nerves as a narcotic I cannot say; but from some cause I slept profoundly. Not a dream haunted me. I was as unconscious as the tired ox in the furrow.

In the morning I was awakened by the sound of a human voice. Whether it was near or far off I could not make out. It grew articulate by degrees.

The first words that I caught were these: "I'm afraid he's made away with himself. I was doubtful he would last night. He was too glum and reserved like."

I don't get hold of such chaps every day. Everett, Everett, I say, can't you wake up?"

As this salutation was accompanied by the grating sensation of a huge coarse hand passing from my forehead over my eyes and across the bridge of my nose, I made haste to come to myself. The light from my window, struggling through the grating, soon enabled me to distinguish the rough features of the man who had locked me in only, as it seemed to me, a few minutes before.

"Ha, have you forgotten anything?" I asked

"Not you for one thing. You may be sure of that. It's time for you to get up. You've got company. If other folks didn't take more care of you than you do of yourself, sir, I'm afraid you would go to the devil indeed. But do hurry up, for he's dreadfully impatient."

"Who is it?"

"Don't ask me. I put the same question to him. I thought he'd knock me down. But he didn't. Told me 'twas none of my business, though. If it hadn't been for the dollar that he slipt into my hand, and a devilish chunked driving-whip that he carries, I'd have told him to wait till daylight. But I 'spose it's a way he has. Damned toppin' way any how. Carries it through pretty well though. Tolerable sassy old fellow, I call him. I shouldn't like to impose on him."

By this time I was out of bed and partly dressed.

"Show him in," I said.

"But he says I'm to show *you* in. He says he's not going into a stinking hole like this. He says the best room in this house ain't good enough for him to sit down in or you either. And as for the jail part of it, bah! That's exactly what he said. He's ordered breakfast enough for six men, and he looks as if he could eat it. Are you ready, sir?"

"Yes, can I go without irons?"

"Yes. That was a tender point with the old fellow. Says he to me, 'if you fetch that boy down with garters on I'll knock 'em off. Don't you dare to put garters on him. You think, you blackguard, that

you're going to tie his arms behind his back and hang him; but you won't. He's a gentleman. If you put one of your dirty paws on him it will be *mayhem*.' I shouldn't wonder if he'd come to make a rescue. If he tries it, I shall blow his brains out; that's all. Come on, sir."

I followed the bragging fellow down stairs with a strong conviction that my visitor was not a stranger to me. When we came to the passage leading into the parlor, I was a good deal fluttered with anticipation. As soon as the jailor opened the door I was relieved. Mr. Barker sat in an arm chair with his back toward me looking out of the window. He had on a "grey-mixed" overcoat with three capes, and his white hair was combed over the top of his head in his best manner. When he heard the door open he arose and made a demivolt, to bring himself to face me, that I would not have thought a man of his age and bulk could have achieved, and rushed toward me like a hurricane. He drew me into his great vortex and lifted me up from the floor with a mighty hug until my cheek came to the level of his lips; and kissed me till he was tired enough to release me. Then with his hand on my shoulder, and his great blue eyes brim full of the tears that could not find channels of escape large enough in his swarthy cheeks, he regarded me a moment with the tenderest anxiety and fell to kissing me again. This unwonted demonstration so overcame me that I fell forward upon his breast, and thus, with our arms thrown about each other, I lay rather than stood panting, until he carried me to the big arm chair and cuddled me down in it.

"It's a plaguey bad business, my son," said my grandfather, wiping his face and eyes with his silk handkerchief, and then putting it over the crown of his head and holding the ends in his hands. "A plaguey bad business. It's nothing but Jeffersonianism and puritanism and flummery. I knew the world was coming to a bad end; but I never thought it was moving at such a devil of a rate and over such a road. It has

brought on my old heart disease. The valves leak again. I had set last night to die in, but I was so mad with Trowbridge and everybody else, that I wouldn't do it. I couldn't spare the time. As those rascally democrats say in Congress, when they want to stave off a federal measure, the thing must be 'indefinitely postponed.' Bad as I hate them, I have been obliged to adopt it. I can't afford to die and I wont until I see you through this miserable business. Yesterday I got news that my half sister Polly had died in New York and left me her whole fortune. Everybody says I shall squander it. Everybody is a fool! I should have spent a part of it in building a church on The Ridge where prayers could be read in English, fit for a Christian to say amen to; but that must wait. I shall take care of you first, my boy. Don't you worry about my heart. It has got nothing for it but it must hold out. The organ is perfectly tight, my son. Look here, you jailor fellow. You go out. I've got something private to say to my grandson, do you hear?"

"I can't leave the prisoner, sir."

"But you must leave him. Don't you see that your responsibilities are divided. You're a taverner as well as a jailor. I'm sorry that I forgot to give you a dollar (he had already given him one;) I'm so troubled about my grandson, that I can't think of anything. Here it is. Now go and see after my breakfast. Have two plates. Mr. Everett will breakfast with me. Don't spoil the scrambled eggs, and if you fry the beefsteak instead of broiling it, I'll throw it in your face, do you hear? Stop. I forgot something. Oh, I remember. Send Peter here."

"Who is Peter, sir?"

"My negro servant who drives my phaeton. Did you suppose it was the apostle? I wish I had him here with his keys. I'd take the boy home with me. Do be in a hurry. The hunger of death is dyspepsia compared with mine. You have no adequate conception of the wholesomeness of my appetite."

Thus coaxed and stormed at, the jailor disappeared

and in some talismanic way, almost before he had closed the door, Peter opened it. Much as he feared his master on ordinary occasions, he did not even look at him now, but rushed up to me, caught my hand and broke into a great blubbering fit of crying.

"Peter!" shouted my grandfather.

"Yes-sir."

"Fetch in the things."

"Yes-sir."

Out went the slouchy son of Africa, leaving the door open behind him, in his haste. "The seasons are all turned round in that fellow's head," said my grandfather. "He thinks it's summer. Ugh! what a blast. This hill can't be more than ten miles from the north pole. In another hundred years—mark my words, Frank—in one hundred years from this date the only inhabitants on this hill will be white bears and Esquimaux. How they'll ever get icebergs up here, eleven hundred feet above tide water, I don't know, but I suppose the face of the country will change. Ugh!" he added by way of climax, tugging at the ends of the handkerchief to fit it closer to his head. "They *must* have icebergs, you know, or they couldn't exist."

In a minute Peter appeared at the door, stooping under the weight of an enormous trunk.

"Set it down and go for the feather-bed, bolster, pillows, comforters, coverlet and flannel sheets," said Mr. Barker. "Shut the door after you. Have you been reading Riley's narrative? Do you think you're in Africa? I wish you were," said the old gentleman, as Peter disappeared.

In a few moments the bedding lay piled up in a confused mass near the trunk in the middle of the floor, and my grandfather was sailing solemnly around the heap as if he had been a discoverer circumnavigating a new group of islands. The capes and skirts of his great-coat not inaptly represented sails, and his motion was as sedate as that of any keel that ever plowed the unfathomable waters. Suddenly he came to anchor in the lee of the feather-bed.

"Frank," he said, "you mustn't be discouraged. Large things grow out of small beginnings. When I was born I weighed less than two pounds. They slipped my mother's wedding ring over my left hand, and up to the shoulder, put me in a silver tankard and covered me up with a snuffer tray. Nobody thought I would live to grow up. Now look at me. I am over seventy years old and weigh two hundred pounds avoirdupois. I always think of that when I'm in trouble. I always say, 'Don't get discouraged, Barker; you're little now, but you'll grow.' And so I have grown, and so I keep on growing. I've grown within the last two weeks. I feel like a young man. If it were not for the valves, and some other tendencies which I can't stop to dwell on now, I should consider myself a young man. I have always thought the Barkers were constitutionally long-lived. But you see, my son, they don't give us a chance to come at the average. They cut themselves off before they get to be old. But, as I was saying, I have grown within two weeks. I've grown rich. I'm plaguey sorry Polly died. I'd rather have remained poor than to lose a hair of her head. You know that. I only mention my good luck to encourage you. We won't speak of this trouble of yours. It is foreordained, as your father would say, that you are to live and be rich and great. You'll be a great writer yet. Perhaps you'll write plays. If you do, write something cheerful. Don't write tragedies, I hate tragedies. We've had enough of them in the Barker family. Look at that bed and bedding. I bought that property at a vendue for next to nothing. It'll keep you warm. And look at that," he continued, giving the trunk a thwack with his foot. "I'll show you treasures!"

He knelt on the floor, took a key from his pocket and—while he was humming that stanza of "The Battle of Bunker Hill," beginning "Now Mars, I dare thee, clad in smoky pillars,"—opened this repository of his bounty—and disclosed its contents.

I think it would be hard to find another such medley as he had brought me. Apples, oranges, gingerbread,

cheese, nuts—all done up in separate packages—he handed out and laid on the floor with the gravity of a miser counting out his money.

"See here, Frank—and here—and here—and what do you think I have in this paper?"

I confessed that I was unable to guess.

"It's the tractate on Tom Jefferson that put Eunice to sleep," he said chuckling at the eminiscence. "Poor Eunice. She's capable of understanding it, but she was tired. You see it was long after midnight. She told me, before I began to read, that she should fall asleep. There is something about the small hours of the night that lethargizes folks, and puts them into unaccountable conditions. Philosophers have tried to explain it and failed. The poets have attributed it to the tide and to spiritual bewitchment. Sir John Falstaff, you know, went out with the tide, and the younger Mr. Hamlet saw things in the short hours that confused him. There is something in it. I've always been sorry I got angry with Eunice about that tractate. My being up late at night, I suppose, has given my poor little wife a great deal of trouble. But I always told her that I had the worst of it. So does the owl. People complain of the owl, when not one in ten hears him screech, and the tenth man doesn't lose five minutes sleep by it. The owl has to go through the whole of it, and he does it like a martyr. My sympathies always go with the greatest sufferer. If the owl is sane, he must be impelled by a strong sense of duty, for from his solitary habits he cannot be thought to be a convivial bird. If he is crazy, he is a Barker and deserves the commiseration of the world. But never mind *him*. Here is the tractate. Read, mark and inwardly—eh?"

I promised him that I would give it a careful perusal.

"And now," resumed the old man clutching up a brown-paper package from the bottom of the trunk, "this is my last, best gift. Here are the comedies. Here is 'Winter's Tale,' 'As You Like It,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Twelfth Night.' I didn't fetch

the tragedies. I was afraid they would put 'toys of desperation' into your head. You know what I mean. Mind about those toys. They he most sudden and dangerous that ever came in your wake."

At this moment the jailor came in.

"Breakfast is ready, sir."

"Very well. Come, Frank. Don't you feel hungry?"

"Not very, sir."

"I do. I could eat a grindstone."

We went into the dining room and sat down at the table. I must own that the beef-steak was not fried and that the scrambled eggs were excellent. In this important drama, Mr. Barker might have fitly personated famine. The jailor waited on us. I could see that I was rising every moment in his estimation.

"Have you sent for the high sheriff?" my grandfather asked, when we had finished.

"Yes, sir. He will be here in a minute."

"Very well. Give Peter a drink of Santa Cruz rum and then let him have his breakfast. Mind about the rum. Give him just half a gill. Measure it in a wine glass. He isn't as discreet as Duncan. If he gets half a drop more than that, he'll make a promiscuous ruin of me and the phaeton before I get to The Ridge."

"I'll do just as you say, sir. Here comes the sheriff."

The chief executive functionary of the county now walked into the room shivering with cold.

"Good morning, sheriff," said my grandfather.

"Good morning. How do you do, Mr. Barker? You keep early hours."

"I'm obliged to, in order to watch you, sir. Where did you put my grandson last night?"

"Middle cell, second story. It was the best I could do for him."

"Sheriff," said the old gentleman scrutinizing the man from top to toe, "this won't do. You don't often get a gentleman's son in your clutches. The distinctions of life must be kept up, even in a jail. Don't



you tell me you haven't got a better room in the prison than that. I know better. I have been one of the county commissioners. I helped to remodel this den of yours. You musn't fob off the grandson of a commissioner with such a dormitory as that. You'll lose caste by it. You'll never get re-elected, sir."

"But, Mr. Barker, remember the grave nature of the offense charged."

"Persecution, sheriff! Nothing but persecution. Don't talk to me about the nature of offenses. Woe unto the man by whom they come. But that boy is innocent. He is a Christian, sir. He was brought up it is true, in a puritanical way, but he was taught to fear God and honor the Federal Constitution. They say there are such things in the Far West as prairies. I never saw one of the plaguey things, but I believe they exist. Well, sir, put that boy on a Western prairie and tell him that he is in custody of the law, and you may leave him alone night after night. The law to a puritan is like his God, sir. It is an invisible presence. I pledge you my honor that he won't run away. Now, sheriff, there is a room at the top of the house with windows; one that looks south-westerly toward the lakes and one that looks easterly toward the river. You must put Frank into that room. He must have a chance to look out. I always told him that if he ever got up high enough to look off, he'd see something. What do you say?"

The debate was very long, and on the part of Mr. Barker, I must confess, it was not particularly characterized by courtesy. It ended as most such squabbles did when Mr. Barker was a participant. He carried his point. In less than half an hour, I was domiciled in the upper room of the jail, with a blazing hickory fire, a nice bed, a reading table adorned with the *Tractate* and the *Comedies*, and two barred windows looking out on the loveliest lakes and the most petulant, irrepressible little river that a December sun ever shone upon. This river wound through the first lake, then through the meadows beyond, and finally lost itself in

the larger expanse of water that reflected the brows of the snow-covered hills on its margin, and offered a fine perspective for the dome of the mountain that rose in the distance.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE TEMPEST.

AFTER Mr. Barker's visit my circumstances were a good deal improved. I had plenty of fuel for one thing. The white hickory that grew on the ledges in the western part of the town was almost as heavy as pig-iron, and I kept the chimney roaring with a blaze from morning till bed-time. The red coals on the hearth afforded me great satisfaction. When I was serious, I concentrated my thoughts by looking at the fire. When I was idle, I amused myself with roasting chestnuts, apples, and quinces. Sometimes I took it into my head to cook my own breakfast, and broiled my steak or fried my pickerel and perch with my own hands.

As soon as the evening came on, I lighted the candles, opened my Shakespeare, and often forgot my sufferings as completely as if I had been roving over the fields in summer time. My habit of mental abstraction stood me in good stead now. How I revelled in "The Tempest." I was led then to form conclusions about the artistic merits of the poet, different from those generally entertained at that time. It was the received opinion that he only wrote his dramas for the stage, without much regard for their future standing as works of art; that he only estimated himself as a business man, who was following a particular calling, and was altogether unconscious of the reach and extent of his powers. I examined the sonnets, and from the internal evidence afforded by them alone, I became satisfied that the world had been so bewildered by the spontaneity of the man, as to overlook the current of formative skill that lay beneath the surface.

From "The Tempest" I learned to verify the theory of Milton, that the imagination does not die out with youth, but, with proper culture, reaches its height in years-of late maturity. I committed the most stirring parts of this production to memory, looking from the page to the fire, and back again to the page, as I muttered the cadences to my own ear. I have never lost those harmonies. I do not expect to lose them in this or any world. They constitute one of the staples of my immortality.

But Shakespeare was not the only author that I read. I dissected several bodies of divinity. By doing so I found out with what appropriateness they are called *bodies*. I studied philosophy, too, and law, and history. I even read the Tractate. On finishing it, I felt disposed to think charitably of my grandmother for falling asleep over it. It was well enough written, but it was not possessed of an amiable spirit. I thought it was as unreasonable as Mr. Edwards's Treatise on the Will, and not nearly so temperate in its expression.

One of my chief diversions was standing at the window and looking at the coils of the river as it wound through the meadows between the two lakes. The winter soon came fiercely on, and, before I was aware, I found river and lakes all shut in with ice, and soon after the blue-grey surface was hidden beneath a mantle of snow. I could see men and boys standing over the holes that they had cut in the ice, watching the lines set for pickerel.

Sleigh bells jingled in the frosty air. The hills looked sombre and cold. When the snow storms came on, they lasted for days. The winds howled so around my windows, that I was sometimes afraid I should be left without a roof to shelter me. The only quiet place in sight was the burying-ground at the foot of the hill. I could command a full view of it from my eastern window. The white monuments could hardly be distinguished from the snow that formed the fore-ground, back, and middle-ground. This repository of dead people was for all kinds of notables; colonial governors,

signers of the Declaration of Independence, judges, authors, clergymen. What did those crumbling ruins represent?

The dead? How could that be? Did the nerveless hands lying there sway the sceptre of colonial authority, did they point the criminal to his doom, did they articulate distinctions that Christ never made between this lifeless proposition and that? How, save from a holy association, known only to their living kind, were those fragments of demolished houses better than the sod beneath which they had sunk? Would these dry bones on some appointed day arise at the blare of an archangel's trumpet, clad in garments of flesh, and after countless ages of repose—itsself almost an eternity of annihilation—stand facing the east to receive sentence for an eternity then to begin? Or, was the resurrection all the while going on? Might not life, with death its apparent negation, but real counterpart, follow the same law as Sirius and the Pleiades, rise even in setting; and might not the opening of the next state be only an entering upon a sphere of revolution, obedient to infinite gravitations unknown to this? Why should the uniformity of God's providence in material things be departed from in the spiritual? Are not the analogies against it? Are not the two orders inseparable parts of one plan? If not, why are immortals first clothed upon with mortality? Why should the end mock the beginning? In the beginning was the Word. It called the created material into form, as the functional basis of the spiritual. Why should not the rising follow the setting star—not with a lost, but rather with an intensified and glorified identity—without a break in its spherical motion, the setting and the rising being only parts of an endless progression? The second state of man may be more sacred than the first, in that it is nearer to God, as the death-bed may be; and, perhaps for the same reason, is more hallowed than the birth-pillow: but are they not stages of the same journey, the one as important as the other, to the evolution of the momentous result?

So I perplexed myself passing from one great expounder and elementary writer to another ; trying to reconcile antinomies, and reduce circular motion from angular antagonism. So have I seen a bewildered bird in winter time hopping about among the stones, trying to find a crumb of bread or a grain of wheat, chirping its feeble chirp, and ruffling its feathers over the frozen chaff that its bill could not penetrate.

One morning, at the close of the January thaw, I was awakened by such a glitter that I thought the prison was on fire. I jumped out of bed and ran to the window. There had been a prevailing mist for the previous two days, that had made sad inroads in the snow. When I went to bed the night before the valley was flooded, and the two lakes had blotted out the intervening river, and formed a junction that stretched further than my eye could follow. Toward morning it had grown cold. I must have had a sleep-consciousness of it, for I had drawn the thick blanket that lay at my feet carefully over me during the night.

What was my astonishment at the change outside ! The swollen lake was a glare of ice. So were the guttered streets, so were the hills, so, from the ground to the topmost twigs, were the elms that lined the sidewalks. Their panoplies of silver towered above the houses, and turned the rays of the morning into all resolvable colors with their multiplying prisms. Such a demand was made upon the eye that it could see nothing with distinctness. Yet the sight had a fascination in it, and held me entranced till order grew out of it. Such an experience may come to the soul newly admitted into the observatory that stands at the center of all truth. The organs of vision, at first confused, will, by degrees, get accustomed to the light. What was partial and broken, will take to itself wholeness and form ; colors will adjust themselves, and motions, at first inexplicable, will be found to address themselves to one purpose and end.

I spent nearly the whole day in studying this phenomenon. As I had nothing else to do, I allowed none

of its modifications of appearance to escape me. When the sun became vertical, this silver coat of mail was painfully white and glaring. It not only blinded my eyes, but benumbed my other organs of sensation and consciousness as well, until I fancied myself suspended in the air above a vast plain of ice, unable to ascend. The fetters of the fire god were upon me again. Caucasian peaks of cloud were above me ; glaciers of desolation were beneath me. The whiteness and stillness of the scene struck me through and through with cold. If it would only blow, if it would only bluster, I cried; then I, too, could put on my armor and do battle with it. But who can contend with hoary calm and smiling, chill desolation ? At last it fell out according to my wish. About four o'clock in the afternoon, it came on to blow, and without perceptible premonition, blew a wintry, wild hurricane. Out of the north came the invisible host of winds, to meet the unbattled ranks of elms and sycamores, now again rosy and vermillion with the slanting sunbeams. There was just one cry of onset, and down went helm, and shield, and spear. Off dropped head and arm, and asunder fell the cloven trunk, and in a reverberating crash, the whole village seemed to go to ruin in a moment. Not the village only felt the shock. I could see the trees fall on the hill-tops. The distant mountains were reft of the weather-beaten branches that had so long hidden their unsightly rocks, and stood bald in the glance of the now rising moon.

I looked out half the night upon the splintered trees, and tried to make their doom identical with mine. But the parallelism was very imperfect. The trees grew and fell. There is no responsibility in growing. Does the man grow or does he build ? If I could only have believed Mr. Edwards's theory — or Mahomet's — I should have slept.

## CHAPTER XLIX

## ECLIPSE.

THE February term of the court was drawing nigh. It was now the 25th of January, and on the third Tuesday of the next month my trial was to begin. The more I strove to put off the contemplation of the subject, the more it forced itself on me. It finally came in the night in the shape of a bad dream, so very bad and so suggestive of my prospects that I do not like to mention it. I tossed wretchedly in the bed for hours.

I arose, opened the ample bed of coals and piled up a huge structure of hickory logs on the hearth. The wind moaned piteously around the prison. I lighted my candles and dressed myself, while the flames crackled through the crevices between the logs and went roaring up to meet the wind at the top of the house. The sparks from the newly disturbed coals flew spitefully into my face and drove me back from the fire-place. But this annoyance was only momentary. I resealed myself and tried to look my situation in the face. It was useless; I was like a man shut in a vault, conscious of the presence of an enemy, but unable to discern the outline of his shape or features. I could feel the stifling breath of some baleful presence, but could not find it. Might it not be within me? Had I swallowed poison in my sleep, and was the subtle influence tying my heart strings into a knot, dissolving my brains, stopping my ears, unknitting my sinews? I fancied I could feel my nerves burning, and hear them snapping in different parts of my frame as they consumed. I put my hand over my forehead and pressed it. The room was full of scintillations, not from the hearth this time but coming down, as I thought, from the ceiling. I shut my eyes, but the fiery currents met in them just as they had done before. I had so much light and such broken light that I could not see. Has the family curse taken possession of me at last? Shall I never sleep again?

This is the third night that I have counted nearly every stroke from the village steeple. Sleep—sleep—sleep! I cried. I had in my trunk a vial of valerian and one of laudanum. In the madness of this new and sudden apprehension I got down on my knees and fingered about in the dark for the valerian. I seized a vial, put it to my lips and drank a portion of the contents. It was the laudanum. Soon the sparks lighted up into a flame, and then a wide impenetrable darkness settled over me.

## CHAPTER L.

### LIGHT.

THE first sensation on coming to myself was akin to that often fancied by me as peculiar to dead people when the living sit upon their graves and talk about them. I had a preternatural desire to hear, and a preternatural keenness of hearing, without any power of expression or participation. I tried to turn myself about, but the sheet, like a tyrannical shroud, coiled around my limbs and kept me from so much as drawing my breath. I felt a tingle at my wrist as if an artery had been punctured and the pulsating life-stream were ebbing away.

"Is there any sign of life in it, Doctor Langdon?"

"Yes, deacon, just a twinge like a throb of pain. Wait a minute; hold your breath. Upon my soul, he's coming or going, one of the two!"

"Lord be thanked, whichever way it is! The change must be plaguey insinuating: I can't see any, doctor."

"Hush, Mr. Barker. You put me out in the count. Help to steady up his mother. She is going to faint."

Then I heard a sigh, and then steps unsteadily and slowly shuffling along the floor, and felt a motion in the air as of something swaying. The door opened hastily and creaked softly. Then came on a long



silence. Nothing broke it but an elastic, regular sound that seemed to come from the other side of the world. I could make nothing of it. I have since imagined that it might have been the ticking of the doctor's watch. At any rate it appeared to associate itself with the tingling at my wrist and to keep time with it.

Soon after I felt my head lifted up, and was aware of something hot and strangling being forced into my mouth. It passed through my whole nervous frame in a moment—passed and came exulting back on the tides of circulation, of respiration—in one word, of life. I was in the world again. I felt the cool swathing of the linen under and over me; the atmosphere of the room; the presence of persons standing breathless around me; the impress of fingers at my wrist; the unmistakable ticking of a watch near me, and of one or two more farther off, and then my eyes opened without any volition of mine, and began making pictures of objects again, as if their function had never been suspended.

There was Dr. Langdon standing by, counting my heart-beats, and smiling; my father, at the foot of the bed, looking through me, his solemn eyes moistened with tears; and Mr. Barker in front of me, just coming to a halt after a pilgrimage across the floor. A fire was blazing in the room, but there were no candles alight. "Good morning," I said, addressing the whole company at once.

"Good evening," replied the doctor. "You have slept longer than you thought. It is coming on evening. Don't try to talk much. You feel confused, don't you?"

"No, sir. I have my thoughts about me. I don't think it will hurt me to speak."

By this time my father had stepped around to the back of the bed, and my grandfather had approached nearer, so that each of them could grasp a hand. They stood holding me so, and looking at the doctor as if for permission to say something.

"If it don't tire you, Frank, you can do whatever you like," said the doctor.

I sat up in bed and embraced both my relatives affectionately.

"Good evening, since it is evening," I said. "I have given you another bout of trouble. I wish I had died, but whatever may be the result, whether I am to live or die, I had no intention of doing myself a mischief by this rashness. I was only seeking relief, temporary relief."

"What do you mean by temporary relief?" asked my father shuddering. "Horrible, horrible!"

"Most horrible was the way Hamlet climaxed it," said Mr. Barker.

"Don't trifle with death and eternity," replied my father. "I entreat you not to do it."

"No more do I," said the old gentleman. "How could I, who live in the hourly expectation of both?"

My father darted such a glance at him from the corner of his eye, as the point of a diamond makes in a pane of glass while cutting it. But he refrained from saying anything. However repellant to one another these two fierce extremes of human nature might be, I saw that they met in at least one focus of belief—they believed me guilty of an attempt upon my own life.

"I am innocent of what you accuse me," I reiterated.

"Innocent!" cried my father.

"Don't talk about it, Everett. You don't understand the subject; you may thank God for once that you were not born a Barker.

"You couldn't help it, my boy," added my grandfather patting my cheek. "I know that very well. It's my own fault. I forgot when I left the comedies for you to read that 'Hamlet' and 'Julius Caesar' were bound in with them. They are plaguey suggestive. Full of poppies and mandragora."

"No worse than the rest of them, I dare say," said my father sternly. "These playwrights are all of a piece. They do nothing but angle for human souls. Of course they put—put —"

"Put toys of desperation in his head you mean," said Mr. Barker.

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"Not half so bad as your fatalism, Everett," retorted the old gentleman. "Look on that table, doctor. There's Edwards and Bellamy and enough more vials of wrath to 'crack nature's moulds and confound the universal peace.' There's poison enough done up in those half-dozen packages to drive all the hordes of Asia into the Ganges."

"Gentlemen," said the doctor, "this will not do for a sick room. You'll drive the patient mad. If you insist on discussing such subjects you must go somewhere else."

The irresistibly comic element in "the situation," as the actors say, set me off into a nervous fit of laughter.

"There, see what you have done," resumed the doctor. "Restoratives can't counteract everything. If you don't mean to kill him outright let us have an end of it. Open your mouth and swallow this, Frank. Lie down and shut your eyes."

"It's brandy, doctor. It strangles me."

"Come with me, Everett," said my grandfather. The two antagonists locked arms and walked out of the room together. In a few minutes I was asleep.

When I awoke it was dark. The fire place was opposite, so that I could look straight into it. The fire was not very brisk. Random flames flickered fitfully on the hearth and died. My few articles of furniture wavered in them and cast quaint shadows on the walls. I could see no one in the room. "They have left me," I cried to myself, "or rather they have not been here. The whole appearance was a mockery. Everything is unreal but my misery. Perhaps that is it."

I tossed about uneasily. I felt a dull pain at my wrists and insteps. This was always so with me after any intense mental excitement. I suppose it was partly the effect of the brandy, for I had not drunk it half a dozen times in my life. I was born with brandy enough in my blood, one would think, without imbibing any.

I felt such a depression of spirits that if I could have got hold of a bottle of anything diabolical I should have drained it. My mind was all broken up into black pools. Awful apprehensions about Marcella haunted me. An unusual length of time had elapsed since I had heard from her. I ran over all the scale of conceivable things that might have happened to her. She was sick; she was dead; she had cast me off with loathing as a thing too vile for her to touch. I forgot my other relations with the world. What was death to me? How could one kind of death be more ignominious than another? The world! I was no longer in the world. I was under it. The weight of its mountains and seas was upon me.

Then the instinct to make one more struggle for life took possession of me and I cried out, as one going beyond his depth in that last drowning fit of ours, without knowing what he is saying calls upon the light out of the darkness.

"Marcella! oh, Marcella!" In the flicker of the reviving hearth-flames the shadow of a face hitherto concealed was eliminated as if from the wall, and moved along it, coming nearer to me—it and the harmoniously stooping figure and the arm graciously outstretched toward me. A hand soft and warm slipped into mine and was clasped in it. Was this our final and everlasting reunion, or was the intensity of the impression that it made upon me one of the conditions of its brief duration? I strove to speak. The knot in my throat strangled me.

"Not now. Not a syllable. Frank, I know what you would say, but I will not hear it now."

She pressed her palms upon her temples and propped her head against the wall with an incisive energy so at variance with the sobbing emotion of her voice that I quailed before it and remained silent. She stood a moment motionless and then bent over me, smoothed the pillows, put one hand upon my shoulder and supporting my head with the other, laid me down to rest.

"I have come here to do my duty to my best friends,

Frank; to you and to your mother," she said. "Nothing shall hinder me. I know what your grandfather believes, and what your father and mother still suspect. I will help you to disabuse their minds. Self-destruction was not in your thoughts; I can vindicate you better than you can yourself. I understand you better. You are innocent of any such design. Were all the world to assert it, I would not believe it. You acted rashly and blindly that is all. Nor does anything relating to William need to be further explained to me. You will come safely out of this trial. God takes care of the innocent. I shall stay here regardless of what the world may say, and watch with you until the end. Your mother—don't sob—I know you are weak and not fit to hear me but I must say it—your mother is here and will remain with me."

I found it impossible any longer to repress my feelings. I sat up in bed and clasping my hands together cried out :

"Oh, my mother, my poor, poor mother !"

"She is heart-whole," said Marcella, smiling triumphantly, and at the same time unlocking my hands. "I cannot deny that your rashness gave her a great shock. It recalled a dark hour in her own life that she would gladly forget. But perhaps it is as well that she cannot, for in remembering it she remembers a resolve rooted in faith and kept alive by tears of repentance. She fainted when she first saw signs of returning life in you. She is better since. She will be with you in the morning. I have said what I have at her request. I could do it, hard as it is for me, better than she could. Now go to sleep and let us say no more about it. You are very weak. Forgive me for making you worse."

She stooped down and kissed me. I fell asleep under the delusion that angels were ministering to me.

## CHAPTER LI.

## THE ÆSTHETICS OF SUICIDE.

THE next morning Mr. Barker came into my room at an early hour and before my father was stirring. My mother and Marcella were with me. He took no notice of any of us for some minutes. He did not sail about with his usual upright gait, but bowed his head as if it were too heavy for him to carry, and stopped at intervals to poke the fire with his stick. I had not seen him carry a staff half a dozen times before in my life; never except when he was in a fit of depression and under the apprehension of immediate death from one or more of those dreadful diseases that used to haunt him at such times. After a little while his powers of locomotion appeared to give out and he sat down in a chair before the fire, drew his silk handkerchief down over his forehead so as to hide his face, and sat there so long that I thought he was asleep. Finally he turned to my mother and said solemnly :

"Mary, I have a private communication to make to Frank. You know I have left my little wife all alone, and must go back to The Ridge this morning, so that I have only a few minutes to spare. Can you and Marcella step out of the room and give me a chance?"

My mother looked uneasily first at him, then at me, hesitated a little and then led Marcella out of the room. As soon as she was gone, the old gentleman got up and began to walk, slowly at first and then with an accelerated motion until he was under fair headway, when he opened the broad-side for which I was patiently waiting. "Frank, I saw Phillips just before I left home. We had a long consultation about your case and I have hit upon a plan of defense that I think is impregnable. I know it is. I am not going to give you the particulars of it. If in the course of this conversation, I should drop any hints, you can draw such inferences as you like. I am not responsible for them. All that I

have to say is that you are to keep your own counsel, comply with whatever demands are put upon you, and you will get out of the woods. I am saying this to make you feel comfortable. Now I am going to say something that is not so pleasant as it is wholesome. You have been doing a foolish thing lately, (don't shake your head, I know all about it) something that I always told you to let alone—something that I have ten times the motive to do that ever you had. I could have chosen my own way of going out forty years ago, as my grandfather did, and so saved myself from death by apoplexy, leaking valves and all the rest of it. The world would have winked at it, and many would have justified it on the ground that I was, as Phillips would say, in the line of safe precedents.

“His grandfather did it and he couldn't help doing it,” they would have said.

“Now I have thought of it and thought of it all my life, but I always thought I shouldn't do it. I'll tell you why. In the first place I believe it's wicked. It's the most presumptuous form of that plaguey self-conceit of the Barkers. They always would have it that they knew better than God what was good for them. Secondly, as Stanyan would say, there's such a wide range of choice in the means of doing it, that I should put up with as much as Methusalem did before I could make up my mind to it. Thirdly, there's the chance of failure and the consequent general derangement of the system all the rest of one's life. Then if you still retain the desire, after the first attempt, so that it comes to be a ruling passion, there's the remorse that follows defeat. If I had only tried drowning instead of hanging, arsenic in place of tartar emetic; if I had taken a few more grains of strychnine or, if I had not taken an overdose—it might have been otherwise.

“Then, again, when a man once gets a taste of suicide, it's plaguey soliciting. It makes a fellow such a devilish epicure. If he's got a smattering of it in fresh water, so as to have an inkling of what that impertinent puppy, Alexander Pope, calls ‘the pain, the bliss of

dying,' he'll never rest till he's had the luxury of the salt water sensation, and found out the difference. Especially, if the votary be of an analytical turn, he'll find the field of poisons curiously suggestive, on account of the nice gradations they run into. Suppose Richard the Third, instead of using sharp-cutting tools on others and smashing in their windows, had given his whole mind to the study of how he could make the most of poisoning himself. You know he was a deucedly searching fellow, and never did anything by halves. He was so fierce, it's my opinion he would have made a hellish compound of all the known poisons of his day, and perhaps invented some new ones and let himself off like a rocket. Suppose Hamlet, with his talent for laying up rods in pickle for his step-father, which he never could bear to use until he got some kind of liquor into his veins that fired him up to it, had turned his 'metaphysical soliciting' to the subject of making his own quietus by some refined drug—wouldn't he have?—but perhaps he never would have got to a crisis. It would, very likely, have been the old story of that 'craven scruple' of 'thinking too precisely on the event.' He would have put his distillations into vials and corked them up. He would have kept 'making mouths at the invisible event' until he died of old age. But suppose he had stopped making mouths and uncorked the vials! There would have been a suicide for you worth recording! I have often thought, my son, what a Barker Prospero might have been if he had turned his attention to this branch of learning. If he had set Caliban to mining and gathering roots, and Ariel to distilling, no coral would have been made of his bones. They would have burnt to charcoal, and as to his softer parts, what 'gay creatures of the element' they would have become! It's a subject of very bewildering interest. I wish I could pursue it, but I'm afraid it would excite you. I cautioned you not to meddle with the tragedies, and here I am in the middle of them. But it is only in the way of illustration. Still you had better read them than Edwards



and Bellamy. Satan got up the rebellion in Heaven on the Edwards theory. He couldn't help it, don't you see? He threw the responsibility on God and drew his sword. Let Bellamy alone. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.' Seal Bellamy up in a package by himself and label him 'Ratsbane!' He was a good man and is now a saint in Heaven. But that is because his practice was better than his faith. If he had taken his own medicine he would have died. It is so with Everett. His belief goes one way and he goes another. But he goes ziz-zag. He's a Christian, but he's a crab-tree Christian. He's all sword and buckler. You might bray Everett in a mortar, and among wheat, with a pestle, and the smallest atom of him would fly up in your face and say 'Ram's Horns!'

"But there is one good thing about your late unsuccessful attempt; it will help your defense."

"But grandfather, I made no such attempt."

"Don't interrupt me."

"No, sir."

"Well, I'll tell you. You see, the circumstances relating to Dart's death are against you, and—"

Here Mr. Barker was interrupted by the sudden entrance of my father, followed by my mother and Marcella.

"Well, Frank," said my grandfather, as if about winding up a conversation of commonplaces; "I must bid you good morning, and start for The Ridge. If I don't get home, you see, Mary, your mother, will think I have gone to a vendue. Good-bye, my son."

"Stop a minute, Mr. Barker," said my father. "Let us have family prayers first."

"Well, Everett," said the party addressed, buttoning up the capes of his grey-mixed overcoat, "I'll wait, only you mustn't be discursive. Brevity's the soul of a good many things besides wit."

"Will you lead?" asked my father.

"Go on. I'll follow thee," said Mr. Barker.

My father and the two ladies knelt down at the foot of the bed, while the old gentleman stood in front of

the fire, with his back toward it and his eyes shaded by his hand.

The prayer was very brief, and it was simple and natural, and, infused with my father's manly piety and powerful individuality, it was truly eloquent. When he came to speak of the possibility of an ultimate separation, he wound up with the cherished words—"That bourne from whence no traveler returns." At this unintentional compliment to his favorite author, Mr. Barker lowered his hand from his face just enough so that I could see the twinkle in his eyes, and in true Episcopalian style responded with a hearty "amen." When the prayer was over, and he had taken leave of all the others, he took my father by the hand and said :

"I couldn't help saying amen, Everett. I never could hear a line of Hamlet's soliloquy without saying amen to it. It does you credit."

"What do you mean?" asked my father, turning pale.

"I mean—'That bourne'—I say it is eloquent and it does you credit to quote it. It is in the highest degree devotional and appropriate."

"It is Bible language," replied my father. "You are too old a man to scoff at the Bible."

"That line is not to be found in the Bible," said Mr. Barker.

"I say it is," rejoined my father.

"And I say it is *not*," retorted Mr. Barker.

"Where is it, then?"

"Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare?"

"Yes, Shakespeare, the play-wright. See 'Hamlet,' act 3d, scene 1st. Good morning!"

My father spent nearly the whole of that day searching the Scriptures for that line. He hardly spoke a word till the time came for evening prayers. When he again knelt at the foot of the bed before retiring, he left out the words of the play-wright from his petition. As he was about to leave the room, he turned with the candle in his hand, came up to the head of the bed

and whispered, "is it true that Shakespeare wrote that line about the traveler?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, Frank, I only hope God will forgive me for using it. It's a very specious passage. I thought it was from one of the Psalms of David. Good night, my son."

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE VERDICT.

AT precisely nine o'clock in the morning of the third Tuesday of February, 1812, the bell from the steeple of the court-house sent out to me the long dreaded summons. In those days a murder trial in a rural district was almost as rare as the appearance of a comet, and the court room and all the avenues leading to it were thronged. Seats were reserved in front of the prisoner's dock for Mr. Phillips, my father and mother, my grandfather, Dr. Stanyan and Marcella.

It is needless to tire the reader with the details of the evidence adduced by the prosecution, as it was little more than an amplification of the facts proved on the preliminary trial.

I must own that Mr. Filer managed the case with considerable ability, but with an evident determination to convict me whether I was guilty or innocent. He called several of my college classmates, who testified to a long-existing rivalry between me and the deceased. As they were Southern students and personal friends of William, they put the facts in such a way as made them tell very decidedly against me. My answer to William's challenge had been found in his pocket soaked with water, and indeed almost illegible, but the meaning could be made out, and the characters readily proved to be in my handwriting. The clothes that I wore on the fatal day were also brought into court and identified. Drops of blood—the blood of partridges, pigeons and squirrels—were also found in the coat

pockets and on the legs of the pantaloons. My boots were produced, and proved to have fitted the tracks made in the ooze on the brink of the precipice. My rifle and powder-flask were brought in, and the exact place where they lay under the great pine marked out on a map exhibited by the prosecution. With well-dissembled regret Mr. Filer called my father to prove that I was absent from home during the whole of that day and late into the evening. Deacon Trowbridge was then called, and with a fearful minuteness related everything that he knew about my intimacy with Dart, and my obstinate refusal to go to the town hall to look at his remains. This closed the evidence on the part of the prosecution.

When the defense was called Mr. Phillips made a brief statement of the facts, as he claimed them, and proved the deadly hostility of William by the challenge which he had sent me. He said that as Dart had manifested a disposition to take my life before I had exhibited toward him any act of hostility, the jury had a right to presume that if I had any agency in his death I must have acted in self-defense. He offered to prove in court the statement that I had made of the whole affair as I have detailed it in this narrative. He appealed to the magnanimity of the prosecution to allow this story to go to the jury as evidence, but Mr. Filer, after consulting with Deacon Trowbridge, refused to comply with the request, and, of course, as the accused could not then testify in his own behalf, the statement was not allowed to be heard. He also called many witnesses, my neighbors and friends, who had known me from childhood, to the unexceptionable good character that I had always borne in the community where I had lived. This was all the material he had, and he used it with admirable skill.

Then followed the arguments of counsel, and the eloquent and touching appeal of Mr. Phillips brought tears into the eyes of the jury and the large number of persons who had assembled to witness the trial.

When the presiding judge rose to charge the jury his

voice trembled so that he could hardly make himself intelligible. He had only spoken a few sentences, every one of which was a fatal stab at the defence, when he was interrupted by an outcry in one of the lobbies, and an involuntary commotion of the assembly as unaccountable as it was overwhelming.

"Silence in court," cried the sheriff sternly.

"Come along, yew sneak. Never tell me ez yew air afeared. Ef yew hang back an' doan't tell th' hull trewth and nothin' but th' trewth, I'll hev yer hung ef I dew't myself. I've hed 'nuff o' this business."

"Sheriff," said the chief judge, white with anger, "arrest that brawler and bring him before the court."

"Arrest me—shute me—pizen me—damn me in this world, an' th' world ter cum—yew can't hurt me wus'n I'm ready an' willin' ter be hurt. Come along, Tom. Keep them splay feet o' yourn off th' ladies' gownds; doan't speak till yew're spoke tew; doan't mind judge, nor jury, nor sheriff, nor nobody but God, ez kin kill both soul an' body."

The spectators were now all on their feet, and swaying to and fro with an excitement that neither judge nor sheriff could control. I too was standing up, and from my elevation in the prisoner's dock was among the first to discover the cause and author of this unwonted disturbance.

In the door-way of the jury-room stood Oliver, frenzy and despair depicted on his countenance, tugging away at his huge son Tom and dragging him through the crowd that made way for him with alacrity notwithstanding the intense curiosity and excitement that agitated them. In a moment the sheriff had hold of Oliver's arm and was leading both him and Tom up toward the witness stand on the left hand of the presiding judge, who was staring as wildly as the simplest farmer in the room at this astonishing spectacle. Tom's hat had been demolished in the scuffle and trampled under foot, but the little that was left of Oliver's was still on his head.

"Uncover," said the judge, "and explain what you

mean by this indecent interference with judicial proceedings where the life of a man is at stake."

Oliver jerked off the fragment of his hat and made a low bow to the judge.

"Thet's jest th' pint o' th' argument. Yer Honer's hit th' nail on th' head. It's th' life o' a human critter, an' Tom ken save it. He cud a saved it afore neow. He knows all about the killen. He knows 'taint no murder. He knows ez Mister Frank's no more ter dew with it'n yer Honer. But he's more afeard o' courts'n he is o' th' day o' judgment. He'd a let Mr. Frank, an' me, an' Sally an' th' gals all go ter th' gallus afore he'd shew his misbeholden face in court. His conscience tuk him sudden like a cramp, an' he told me the trewth. Thet's why I broke yer Honer off. Cudn't help it. Whew!"

Everybody stood aghast with wonder and anticipation at this disclosure.

Mr. Phillips at once rose and begged that Tom might be sworn. Mr. Filer objected, on the ground that the testimony was closed and the case argued before the appearance of the witness.

"In a case affecting life, and in the interests of justice, I shall depart from the ordinary rule," said the judge promptly.

So Tom Bramble was sworn, and testified with great timidity and circumlocution substantially to these facts:

Like myself, he had been out alone that day, shooting birds and squirrels, had become tired and lain down on a ledge that commanded the scene of my conflict with Dart, and fallen asleep. He was awakened by the report of some fire-arm, and on starting up saw William rushing toward me with a pistol in his hand, and the smoke rising from a place a little further north than that where he first discovered him. He also saw me advancing toward Dart, and witnessed the struggle between us, precisely as I have detailed it, down to the discharge of the other pistol, and the fatal plunge of William from the precipice into the pool.

He was subjected to a very rigid cross-examination, which he bore with an equanimity contrasting strongly with the timidity that his father had struggled so hard to overcome.

In answer to the question why he had not before disclosed this vital piece of testimony, he gave the same reason for his reticence as that given by Oliver, that from early life he had had a mortal dread of all judicial investigations, and had feared that in case any doubt should be thrown upon his testimony he should be subjected to some dreadful punishment.

Simple and clumsy as he was, his story carried conviction to the mind of every one who heard it. When he had concluded, the judge advised the jury to render a verdict in favor of the prisoner, which they did without leaving their seats. When the foreman pronounced the words "not guilty," the audience rose as one man, and sent up such a shout of jubilation as perhaps was never before heard in a court of justice. It was a long time before order could be restored. I was at once discharged. Then the enthusiasm of the crowd broke out again in a prolonged cry of exultation, and as soon as the court was adjourned, I, who had a moment ago stood on the edge of the grave, was surrounded with eager faces, and welcomed back to life with wild congratulations.

I cannot say that in the ordinary sense of the word, I heard this vindication of my innocence; I only felt the shock in my nervous frame like a discord in music. My thoughts were occupied with the deeper harmonies that no outward demonstrations could reach. I cast one glance at my mother, who stood clinging to my father's arm and looking at me in a kind of ecstatic trance, such as may come to a soul that has passed through the agonies of a separation from the body and waked to the raptures of Heaven; one glance at Marcella's pale face, and I stood transfixed as by a thousand arrows shot from her happy, triumphant eyes. Then I felt my hand clasped in a vise, and saw a tall figure towering above me. I was so tongue-tied that

I could not even utter the word "Father." The tears stood in his eyes, but he too was speechless. The first recognition I had of anything real, was the salutation of my grandfather. He caught me in his arms and hugged me as a woman does a child.

"I knew how it would turn out, my son. Yet I must say Phillips made a mistake in his plan of defence. It was just a miracle, the appearance of Tom. There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will."

By degrees the crowd withdrew from the court room and gave me an opportunity to retire.

In a few minutes the sleigh-bells were jingling in my ears, and in an hour I found myself in front of my father's door just as the sunset was lighting the snow-covered hills with beacons of fire:

## CHAPTER LIII.

### GOING FORTH.

WITHIN a week after my return, nearly everybody in the town except Deacon Trowbridge called at The Ridge to welcome me home. Of course I could not deny myself to such as came to see me at my father's house. Sombre faces they were most of them. I must own that they were not all sincere ones. Some were prying and sinister, others gloomy, others despondent; but in the main there was a prevailing sympathy that expended itself on me, partly as an individual, and partly as the representative of a family long honored in the community. Altogether it was soothing to my father and mother.

I stayed away from the house as much as I could, and walked up and down the fields and along the river, always avoiding the waterfall.

That terrible death had taken such a hold of my imagination that I used to turn round in walking to see if I was not pursued by some avenger. The forms of



nature, especially in the twilight, assumed the most fantastic representations of Deacon Trowbridge. He would shoot out from the thickets, from behind the spurs of the ledges, from the shadows of the apple trees in the orchard; sometimes in wig and cocked hat with velvet coat, small clothes and knee-buckles, as I had seen and known him from childhood; sometimes melting into the trunk of an oak or emerging from it. Like those dreadful portraits of Earl, he was always looking at me, and through me; trying me as a magistrate, testifying against me as a witness, bullying me as an accuser.

The wizard picture of the trial at the court house would rise up before me in my midnight dreams, and transfix me with images of horror and despair.

While this morbid condition of mind was in the ascendant, and while I was drifting I knew not whither, Marcella came, late in September, partly as she said to comfort me and partly to rejoice with my mother.

She stayed a whole week with us, and after the other members of the family had retired to rest we passed together some of the happiest hours of my life.

Late one evening after she had spent a long time in combating my determination never to go forth into the world again, nor mix with its affairs, unless it might be on the ocean, or in a foreign land far away from familiar faces, I replied with an obstinate shake of the head. "No, Marcella, it is true I am acquitted of this great crime; the law of the state and my own conscience accord, but the shadow remains. The only way to avoid that is to keep myself out of the light. Utter darkness casts no shadow."

"It is only the substance that can cast the shadow," she said earnestly. "Remorse is the shadow of sin. You must look upon your situation as others do, as I do. You are not the murderer of the man whom I loved, though I once so bitterly accused you. Now I know it," she said with a long sigh of relief. "Your hand is not stained with blood. Here is mine; I will never doubt you again; why should you doubt your-

self." I took the proffered hand and covered it with kisses.

"I will never surrender it, Marcella."

"It will always be a friend's hand, true and loyal, Frank. No, no, you cannot mean *that*," she cried snatching it from me while a shadow of pain flitted over her face. "You surely cannot mean that. Frank, it can never, never be. It is true I have buried William among the ruins of a desolate life. They are a fit monument for him. Let his grave and his memory be alike sacred forever."

With these words we separated for the night. I went to my chamber and pondered long and deeply on the past, the present, the future, and came to a solemn conclusion.

"I will go forth into the world," I said, "into a new untried world."

That night I penned two letters, of which I here sub-join copies. The first was as follows:

MY DEAR MOTHER: I have come to a sudden resolution and shall act upon it at once. My old friend Captain Jones of the U. S. sloop-of-war "Wasp," should now be in New London harbor. I shall join him without delay. Of course I know nothing of naval affairs, but I am sure of a welcome on board his ship and may be of some subordinate service in the struggle now going on between us and England. I must do something to change the current of association, too painful for me to endure, and I have not a moment to lose. This way of taking leave of you appears to be the best for us both. I could not listen to your sobs and witness your tears at such a sudden separation. I fear, also, that my father would absolutely forbid my departure. Tell him that I feel sure it is for the best, and that I hope this first great act of disobedience will be forgiven. In a few months I expect to return.

In the meantime God bless you both.

FRANK EVERETT.

The other letter was in these words:

DEAR MARCELLA: My mother will inform you of my

plans. Of the moving cause you can better inform her. Be a comfort to her, Marcie. As you have no other mother, it will cost you little sacrifice to be a daughter to your best friend. In this way you will be to me what you have always acknowledged yourself—a sister. If we ever meet again, may I be worthy to call you so. If not, may you be able to remember me with something of the tenderness that such a relationship inspires.

Affectionately,

FRANK.

I had sealed and addressed these two letters before twelve o'clock, and was not long in packing in my portmanteau such clothing and necessities as I could lay my hands on without disturbing the family. I had a horse and chaise of my own. So I stole out into the night, bade adieu with the wave of my hand and a whispered God bless you to the old brick house where I was born, and in which I had been so happy and so miserable, and drove off at a rapid pace in the direction of Oliver Bramble's. I was not long in reaching the brown wooden front of Oliver's house, with its little wild garden and neglected tansy patch, its dark evergreens for a background, and its lawn of bright waters bending like a crescent in front, all alight with star-beams. What recollections flashed from those waters! Marcella, Charlotte, William—their different fates all blended with mine in the meshes of a net in which my imagination could find no rent that offered an opportunity of escape. I went up to the door and knocked. I could hear the breathing of the refugees in this little sanctuary of sleep, but their slumber was so profound that I was obliged to repeat my summons several times before I could rouse any one. Finally a window was raised and a man's head slowly thrust out.

"Who be yew, an' what dew yew want?"

"It is I, Oliver."

"Mr. Frank?"

"Yes. Put on your clothes and come out of doors."

"Lord! What is the matter! What hev yew ben a-dewin neow? Lead us not into temptation."

"I have done nothing at all; don't be a fool, Oliver."

"It's allers a question what yew mean by nothin'. Nothin' with yew is mor'n suthin' is with other folks. One more nothin' o' yourn wud bust up yew're famerly an' me tew. Never mind, I'm a-comin'."

He was not long in putting on his very simple attire and showing himself in the frame work of the open doorway.

"What is it, Mr. Frank. Bless me if there ain't th' dapple hoss an' th' shay. What am I ter dew. Tain t a killin' case is it?"

"Put on your hat and take the reins. I'm tired."

"Where am I ter go?"

"Drive to New London and then I will decide. What are you gaping at me for, don't you understand me?"

"Not so very much. I ain't quick at figgers. Does your father know yew're a-goin'."

"Will you drive me to New London? If not I'll go alone."

"Ef yew've made up yer mind ter go, Pharraoh cudn't stop yew. I'm yer man. Stop a minit an' let me bid Sally good-bye."

He soon re-appeared.

"Had ter wake her up ter kiss her. Never mind. Neow I'm ready."

On arriving at New London I found, to my great joy, that "The Wasp" was riding at anchor in the harbor.

Let me premise here that the commander of the "Wasp" had a favorite nephew, William Rogers, who had been a classmate of mine at Yale, and whose life I had saved while we were swimming in West river. The captain had sent me a valuable watch and had thanked me by letter several times for what he called my "gallant conduct." In fact, he had impressed me with the idea that I really had done something heroic. To fill up the measure of my good luck that morning I met the captain on shore, and he stopped the gig just as he was putting off for the "Wasp," which was al-

ready weighing anchor. He overwhelmed me with congratulations.

"I am dreadfully sorry, Everett, but I really have but little time to spend with you. I am ordered to the Delaware immediately. Still you must go on board the "Wasp." I will steal time enough for that. I wish you could go with me."

"But I am going with you, Capt. Jones."

"With me? Going with me on a cruising expedition?"

"Yes, captain, if you will let me."

"Why, my son, I'd give you half of my cabin and we'll turn in together."

Oliver who was a near witness to these demonstrations, could contain himself no longer. He stepped up to the captain, pulled off his hat, made a low bow and rushed into the midst of his subject.

"'Taint no yeuse remonstratin' with Mister Frank, captain, an' so I come straight ter headquarters. He ain't nothin' more nor less'n a crazy boy ez hes run away from hum. He'll drive his father mad an' his mother mad, an' Mr. Barker madder'n ever, an' turn th' hull Ridge topsy-turvy. He's made trouble enough a'ready. Sally or no Sally, ef he goes I'm a goin'. I'd be willin' ter go ter——"

"Wait, Oliver, don't use any bad words," said I.

"I'm not a goin' to cuss, Mister Frank. I never did cuss but once since I was converted. That wus when I cussed Tom for not tellin' abeout th' murder business, an' then I took it in hand and prayed a week agin it on a stretch, an' so stop't it off. But ef yew go I'm a goin', that's level sure."

He looked as if he could thrash Captain Jones and the "Wasp," to say nothing of me, in his overpowering determination.

"No, Oliver," I replied; "you must go home with the horse."

"He's well off. He's in the stable."

"But you must report that all is well with me, and that I am in good hands."

"Mr. Barker'd hoss-whip me, an' yer father would kill me. I've seen yew afore," said Oliver, doggedly. "Ef you go, I go."

His impetuosity set the captain off into a fit of laughter. When he had recovered himself he said:

"But Oliver—what's your name?"

"Bramble, sir; Oliver Cromwell Bramble."

"What can you do on board, my man?"

"Black boots an' shews, make up beds, scour knives an' forks, wash, bake, make a cheese, airn my livin' a fishin'—an'—an'—"

"Can you cook?"

"That I ken. Try my pork an' beans!"

He was in a mood to promise anything.

"Shall I let him go?" asked the captain of me.

"Ef he goes I'm agoin'," said Oliver, almost gnashing his teeth.

"Get aboard, then," said the captain.

So the matter was settled.

In a half hour we were under way. A word about the "Wasp," once so well known, but now partly eclipsed by her successors in the late rebellion, may not be amiss. She was half-sister to the celebrated Hornet. The "Hornet" had originally been a brig, but the "Wasp" was a sloop from the first, and still retained her original construction and armament. She mounted sixteen thirty-two pound carronades, and two long twelves, with a complement at that time of about one hundred and sixty men. She had been a despatch boat to England before the war, and did not return home until several weeks after the breaking out of hostilities. She was a fast cruiser, and altogether an elegant craft. She had just taken a run off Boston, where she had made one capture, and was now on her return to the Delaware. I went on board of her on the 4th of October, 1812. On the 13th, she sailed from the Delaware again, and ran southeasterly, as well to clear the coast as to fall into the track of vessels going northward.

Of the sharp conflict that followed, and which resulted in our capturing the English brig "Frolic," his-

tory has long since given such a minute account that I should hardly be justified in recapitulating the details of one of the most remarkable naval victories ever recorded. Perhaps I have been too highly commended for what I did on that occasion, as well in the management of the guns that swept the deck of the "Frolic," as in being the very first American who sprang into her rigging when she was boarded by our gallant officers and crew. As I had little motive to protract my life, perhaps my recklessness may have passed for gallantry. However this may be, our triumph was of short duration.

Scarcely had the smoke cleared away from the decks of the "Wasp" and "Frolic" when a large ship was seen standing toward the two dismantled vessels. Escape was impossible, for the sails of the "Wasp" were in ribbons, and both masts of the "Frolic" had fallen soon after the close of the action. The stranger proved to be the English 74-gun-ship "Poictiers." She hove a single shot over the "Frolic," and ranging near the "Wasp," captured both vessels without firing another gun.

But I knew nothing of this until long afterward. At the moment of victory on board the "Frolic" I had been struck on the head by a large splinter, and had fallen to the deck bleeding and insensible. When I recovered consciousness I was a prisoner in the hospital of the "Wasp," and the sloop was in charge of a prize crew, bound for Bermuda. The first person upon whom my eyes rested was the faithful Oliver. He had been nearly frantic with anxiety on my account, and now that I came back to the world of sense, he jumped up and down, clapped his hands and shouted, or rather yelled out an inarticulate welcome that sounded more like an objugation than a greeting.

"Are you mad, Oliver? Can't you quiet yourself?"

"It's all very well for yew ez don't care ef ye're dead or alive, an' wud sooner throw yerself away 'n eat yer dinner. But what am I ter dew? I hev th' 'sponsibility o' th' famerly on my hands. I'm Mr. and Miss Everett, an' Mr. Barker, an' th' hull on 'em. Ef yew

chuse ter throw yerself off this darned ship an' drownd yerself, it's fun ter yew, but I must face th' hull on 'em. That's the difference; an' there's yer head smashed all ter bits."

"It's only a trifle."

"Ev'rything's a trifle. Next time it'll be a foot, and then an eye, and then an ear, an' a tooth, till ther ain't nothin' left on yer but scars. Think o' men dressin' themselves up in feathers an' red strips like woodpeckers, an' goin' aboard ships with all this canvas an' buntin', an' burnin' powder, an' yellin' like so many damned sperets, and firin' iron bullets at one 'nother till ther ain't nuthin' of God's image left but the skilcrton, an' that's all pounded ter bits. Whew?"

"We must maintain the honor of the flag you know, Oliver."

"I can't see why we shud. All this ere nation's got ter dew is ter grow; just keep still like a grain o' mustard seed an' grow till it gits ter heaven big branches, an' castin' a wide shadder, an' all feowls o' th' air come to roost in it. An' ef ther's ter be fighting, Mr. Frank, taint fer only sons ez hes fathers an' mothers an' grandfathers, an' is heir ter more acres o' land 'n they ken shake a stick at in a week. Let poor cusses ez wears ragged coats, an' hes patches on th' legs o' ther trousers, an' hes no glass in the windows, but old hats an' th' flaps o' children's shirts, vindercate th' glory o' th' flag, an' clap ther hands at th' flowncin' an' flappin' o' th' eagle's wings, an' holler hoorah at th' crowin' o' th' rooster on th' steeple o' th' old meetin' house."

While Oliver was delivering himself of these patriotic sentiments, he was dressing my wounds, which he did very neatly. He then turned to the other sufferers. Such as could forget their agony for a moment smiled upon him, and thanked him for his assiduity. He was indeed a most tender and delicate nurse, willing to sit up all night, and go without food himself to minister to the necessities of these poor creatures. Throughout that long and stormy voyage to Bermuda he devoted himself faithfully to this occupation, only catching little



glimmers of sleep from time to time, and waking with that droll twinkle in his eyes to make a gruel, administer medicine or help some disabled seaman to turn himself from one side to the other to quiet his throbbing nerves. When they grew convalescent he told them his religious experience in such a quaint way that they laughed and cried at once, and night and morning he knelt and prayed for the safety of their bodies and the health of their souls. He was a universal favorite on board the ship.

My wound was a bad one, and my condition was aggravated by an uneasy mind. In spite of Oliver's care, and the kindness both of our own officers and our English captors, I fell again into insensibility, and then passed into a raging fever; and when we reached port I was carried ashore more dead than alive. We were paroled, and my companions were soon dispersed; but I, still delirious and apparently dying, was left on the island. I learned afterwards that I was reported dead of my wound, and that a letter which Oliver managed, with great labor, to write home, never reached its destination. The honest fellow would not leave me. He watched me with the solicitude of a parent; he nursed me with the gentleness of a woman; he brought me back from the brink of the grave; and at last I crept out into the sun, worn to the skeleton and almost as weak in mind as in body. I could not bring myself to return home. The inexplicable shadow still brooded over me and flapped its raven wings in my face. The benumbing lethargy still lurked in my breast. I will go further south, I said to myself. I will see the Southern Cross illuminate the crests of the tropical mountains. I will hear the dashing of the Carribean sea against the rocks of Saint Domingo.

I set sail with Oliver, and at last came to anchor within the borders of the republic founded by Toussaint L'Ouverture in that beautiful harbor where Jeremie perched among its rocks, invites the voyager to stop and breathe the air still consecrated as the Heaven of the now mythical cacique.

I sought out a pretty cottage a little removed from the coast, and embowered in palm, orange and cocoanut trees.

In this situation I spent the winter. The delight of the orange blossoms, the rustling of the cocoanut leaves, the beauty of the countless flowers vaulting upon the trees as if climbing to Heaven, or covering the earth and filling the air with their fragrance, overwhelmed me with their deliciousness, and lulled me into a reverie resulting neither from sleeping nor waking, but from the mere satiety of enjoyment. The very lizards were a delight to me as they basked in the sun, and frolicked up and down the boles of the trees. Here nature, clad in her rustling armor of evergreen, had put on the smiles of youth and wore the garments of immortality. Here no howling winds drove the snow into trackless heaps, no fierce hail dashed to the earth the upspringing corn—here the ocean waves met the pebbles on the beach with murmuring lips, and the moon and stars tipped the glazed palm-leaf with silver, purer than that which illuminated the edges of the clouds. The very fire-flies were satellites revolving around me—not in immutable orbits, indeed, but subject to their own, or, perhaps, my whimsical will; lighting up dark vistas of the future or darker caverns of the past—here bright-winged birds were my messengers to carry my thoughts to unapproachable places. Where then was the frozen bosomed North?—she who used to be blown about by blasts that turned spring to winter with the alchemy of one frosty touch? Had she faded from my memory forever?

Alas, no! she haunted me with the stealthiness, the activity of an avenging spirit. Withersoever I would wander up and down, the delusive North pursued me, divested of her snow-wreath, no wintry scowl on her brow, but crowned with arbutus, tinted with maple-blossoms, pale with lilies, blushing with roses, vocal with the music of fountains, crimson with the drapery of sunset; her one central figure rising before me whose averted face (a book sealed and shut against me)

held me spell-bound in its intensity of hopeless worship!

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My strength slowly returned, and with reviving health my mind recovered its tone and I became eager to see my home. I had written occasionally, but communication between the islands and the United States was irregular and uncertain. Two of my letters were lost; the others reached our village long after I did. I had never heard from home since I sailed with Capt. Jones on the "Wasp;" and when Oliver and I embarked in the spring on board a Spanish vessel, bound for New London, we knew nothing of what had happened during our long absence. We landed early in May, and lost no time in setting off for The Ridge, where we arrived just as the sun was going down behind the slopes that left the village in the foreground, set in a cloud-frame of crimson and gold. The garden wall was pink with peach-blossoms, and the folded petals of the apple-blooms were only awaiting the invitation of a few more warm showers to burst into that gorgeous illumination which is the glory of the New England May. The old oak across the road was putting out its young leaves that were grey, not green, as in their riper growth, and the wood in the hollow was dusk in the advancing twilight that showed in all the curves and swells of the fields the emerald grass darkened by the tree-shadows and glittering with innumerable spangles of dew. The scene was all the more sad to me for the air of seclusion and quietude that seemed startled at the very plaints of the whippoorwills as they answered one another from the meadow. I stood for a few moments irresolute, with my hand upon the gate; my heart sank; I could not venture into the silent house; I turned away, trembling with an emotion that I could not explain; and I found myself face to face with Dr. Stanyan. I did not know then the reason of his extraordinary behavior on seeing me. I did not know that I had been mourned as one dead. The good doctor

gave a half an articulate cry as he saw me ; his face turned white, he staggered as if he had been struck, and then he threw his arms around my neck, sobbing ; " Thank God ! my dear boy, my dear boy ! " while the tears ran down his cheeks.

I tried to ask about my father and mother. He checked my hesitating question, and held me back from the gate. " Wait," said he ; " I must prepare them." There was something in his manner which filled me with dread. I followed him across the road, and we stood together leaning against the trunk of the oak. He laid his hand upon my shoulder and broke to me the bad news. My father was dying. He had never quite believed the story of my death, but he had never been the same man since the report came. During the past few days he had failed rapidly. I was just in time to close his eyes. Then, after a few hurried words about myself, the doctor left me alone while he went to my mother.

It seemed an eternity while I waited, pacing uneasily to and fro. At last I heard a rushing across the gravel, a whine at the gate, and poor old Haco, clearing the fence at a bound, leaped upon me, almost beside himself with joy. But there was a sad wistful look in the soft brown eyes. He ceased his transports and pulled me gently by the coat. I understood that he had come for me, and I followed him home.

I shall not describe the meeting with my mother, who tottered half fainting to the steps, and locked me in her loving arms with an embrace whose soft pressure I believe I shall feel till my last day. When I raised my head from her bosom I saw another dear shape in the background ; Marcella's pale face disengaged itself from the darkness ; she placed both her hands in mine ; and with the cry, " Oh, Frank ! " she burst into tears, and fled. Dr. Stanyan whispered me to come to my father. Through the open door into the bedroom I could see Dr. Langdon stooping over the patient's wrist with his watch in his hand. When he saw me he motioned me into the sick chamber. My father was lying

partly on his left side so that his eye rested on me when I entered the room. He was sadly emaciated, but his face was tranquil, and his blue eyes, with nothing of the far-off look that portends approaching dissolution, were bright as ever, but softer than of old. He scanned me very carefully, even to the scar on my forehead, and showed by his smile how glad he was to see me before he spoke. I was surprised to find his voice so clear and strong. It had nothing of the languid drawl of sickness, nothing of the querulousness, only it was a little tremulous, partly from emotion, partly from physical weakness.

"I am glad to see you again, my son. I find it so easy dying. I have put it off as long as I could, thinking that you would come."

"You are not dying, father."

"Yes, Frank; I am dead now as far up as my knees."

I put my hand under the sheet, and found that the lower limbs were cold. I could not suppress the exhibition of my mental agony, and turned to go out of the room.

"Come back, Frank," said my father quietly. "It's very hard for you, I know; but you must see me set forth. I don't think it's a long journey. You would be ashamed to show less fortitude than Haco. Poor fellow. He would lick my hand all the time if I would let him. He knows I am going. He would go with me if he could. If it is permitted to a dog to go to heaven, he will try for it. There is Pat, too," he added, pointing through the open window, where his favorite horse, now twenty-eight years old and very infirm, stood in the field across the road with his head over the bars as if looking at his master. "Poor Pat, I talked of shooting him when he was sick last winter. I thought it would be a comfort to him. I know what he is thinking of; he's thinking that he's got the better of me."

He lay quiet a few minutes with his hands clasped and his eyes closed. He was so pale as I looked at

him, that I thought once or twice my heart and his had stopped beating altogether. So closely did the shadow prefigure that most unsubstantial of all realities. After a little while he opened his eyes and said :

"Frank, when I am gone, Mr. Barker will have great influence over you. It will be impossible for you to help it. He will try to make you abandon the faith of the Everetts. I want to exact a promise from you, if you dare make it."

"What is it, father?"

"As soon as you can compose your thoughts after the funeral, try to fix them upon divine things, and if you can, without doing violence to your faith, join Dr. Stanyan's church. Will you do it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't follow after strange gods. Leave Jupiter and Prometheus to themselves. Let the dead bury their dead. Remember that the soul of man is in the hands of Christ. As the tree falleth so it lieth. Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

He paused a moment, then took my hand, and pressed it against his side a little below the heart.

"It's creeping up and up, Frank. Call your mother and grandfather and grandmother and Dr. Stanyan. We will have family prayers now."

They all came and knelt around the bed except Mr. Barker, who stood reverently with his head bowed while Dr. Stanyan prayed. He did not embrace the Lord's prayer in the petition.

"I think we had better add 'Our Father,' said Mr. Barker. "It is a welcome and a good-bye both in one."

Dr. Stanyan nodded.

"I feel very sinful," added my grandfather, "or I would say it. I'm afraid I've been uncharitable toward James. Will you say it, Dr. Stanyan?"

With a strong effort my father lifted himself up in the bed.

"I will say it, Father Barker, if God gives me strength." He clasped his hands and prayed in the only formulary that Christ has left to those who love

him. Then he took leave of us one by one, and last of all of my mother.

"Mary," he said, "I have just found you out. I can't explain it now. I will when we meet again. Forgive me, child. Good-bye."

The head fell back upon the pillow. The invading enemy, "creeping up and up," had reached the citadel at last.

Had the fifty years, half of growth, half of development, ended here? A moment ago those lips were eloquent with words that had once fallen from other lips, mortal and immortal, recognizing the eternal fatherhood: that heart was beating with the pulses of love. What was there left to us? The white brow, the closed eyes, the still hands, the silence that ushers in a day that has no night.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### AT LAST.

A SAD house was ours after my father's death. It was a fearful shock to my mother, and although she bore it with fortitude and sweetness, she was sleepless and depressed to such a degree that I could scarcely leave her a moment. My grandmother was a great comfort to her, and spent as much time as she could with us. Her gentle ways and soft voice were very soothing to my mother. Then they were so very different, and yet had so much in common, that they never wanted a topic of mutual interest.

Marcella, when she could be spared from home, filled up the intervals of my grandmother's absence. Her father had kept his promise to Dr. Carew and taken little Charlotte, and Nancy, the faithful old nurse, into his family, and Marcella had almost the sole charge of the child.

I tried to renew my friendly intercourse with Marcella, but there was something amiss, and I could not

tell what it was. The love for her which had filled my heart so long, had grown more intense in absence and suffering; it was a passion which engrossed all my waking thoughts, and possessed my sleep. How was it with her? There were moments, at first, when I fancied that there was a tenderness in her voice which I had not felt before, and I recalled, with a perplexity half pleasant and half fearful, the manner in which she met me on my return. But she defeated all my efforts for a close intimacy. She was reserved, and often silent, when we were alone; devoted to the child, and untiring in her attentions to my mother, she seemed to keep aloof from me, and I thought that she made these gentle ministrations occasionally an excuse for avoiding my company. I would not force upon her a love that distressed her; she was too dear to me for that; with a heavy heart I resolved to trouble her no more, but to go my way alone, and trust for a revival of the old sisterly affection. But somehow our intercourse after this became stiffer and more embarrassing than ever.

One evening, when we had been rambling about the farm and talking over the past, we protracted our walk along the river until we came to the mouth of Kinley Hollow Brook, and followed up the thread of that erratic stream till we reached a grassy mound about a quarter of a mile below the pool—out of sight, indeed, but within hearing of the cataract.

In the middle of this mound stood a vast elm—then and still the boast of our neighborhood. The shapely trunk rose about twenty feet from the ground without throwing out a limb and then burst forth into a grand circle of arches. We sat down on the roots that fed this marvellous embodiment of a life that seemed so like an immortality, and tried to count its myriad boughs, and to span with our thoughts the shadows woven out of its innumerable leaves. Where were the men and women who had rested there in times past? Whither had fled the aspirations that once animated them? By what paths had they laid themselves down



to sleep? Why had they perished from the face of the earth and from the knowledge of the present generation, leaving no voice or trace of their existence, while this living harp, played upon by the elements, vibrated from age to age; harmonizing with the waterfall, blending with the hum of insects, the patter of rain drops, the shrieking of the blast, the cry of the fox, the cawing of the crow; throwing off its mantle of leaves for a panoply of ice; adjusting itself to changes with such flexibility that all seasons were alike befitting to it?

Such were some of the questions that we asked ourselves.

"And yet," I said, "we boast of our superiority over the vegetable creation. Within the last hundred years nearly four generations of men have lived and died. During that period this tree has not added a single foot to its stature. How it casts us pigmies into the shade."

"Yes," said Marcella, looking up at its lateral branches that drooped so as to fringe the horizon: "Yes, I sometimes think the tree has something other than a material life. It is continued in us. Its loveliness and beauty survive, entering into the life of the soul. It makes our characters more shapely and graceful. In this way at least the sap of the tree makes one element in the human circulation. I never go back to childhood but I seem to be floating in the air like a tree-top, or creeping blindly under the green grass like a fibre of one of those vast roots. All my reminiscences are above or below the region of my every day life."

I laughed at the whimsical fancy.

"Where does the class of recollections move that you associate with our first acquaintance?" I asked.

"They are all in the upper air. Where are yours of me?"

"In the cells where nature hides her loveliest flowers. In shady places by the brink of fountains, by the side of brooks, by the borders of lakes, under twilight ledges."

"Do none of them rise into the clouds, Frank?"

"The past, no; the future, yes. *These* lift themselves into the clouds and give them their rosiest colors and divinest shapes."

"The future?" she whispered interrogatively, looking into the dim arches of the elm.

"Why do you whisper the word, Marcella?"

She turned her eyes upon me. The hazel and the grey had lost their distinctness. A tear-drop had mingled the colors.

"Of the past I can speak aloud," she said; "but of the future only in a whisper. The past we *have* or rather have had, and have a kind of property in it. The future is not ours yet. The past has just been cleaving the air. We can still feel the vibrations of its wings fanning our cheeks, and trace the line of its flight. The future is hidden in the thicket. Where it will start up, what direction it will take, into what other thicket it will drop, we cannot know. Our feet may be torn with briars in following it, our eyes may be dazed in searching for it. The way to it lies through darkness, and even when we have found it, it will not be what we imagined it. Oh, Frank, sometimes I feel as if I were not strong enough and clear sighted enough to go in quest of it."

She was standing up and leaning against the trunk of the elm, looking at the slate-colored clouds that were just beginning to grow purple and golden in the trail of the setting sun. The vast canopy of the tree had shed a twilight of its own over her features and given a darker lustre to her eyes. I was standing close by her, listening to her voice, watching, worshipping her. All at once a glorious light seemed to break upon me. How blind I had been all these days! My heart gave a bound. I could hardly speak.

"We will join hands and go in quest of that future together," I said.

Without looking at me she turned about and with one hand still clinging to the bark of the elm she extended the other to me. I took it and held it.

"Marcella!"

She made no answer. Her frame shook visibly. She swayed a little toward me. I put my arm gently about her waist, and drew her closer and closer, until the averted face, and the eyes that would not look at me, were hidden upon my breast.

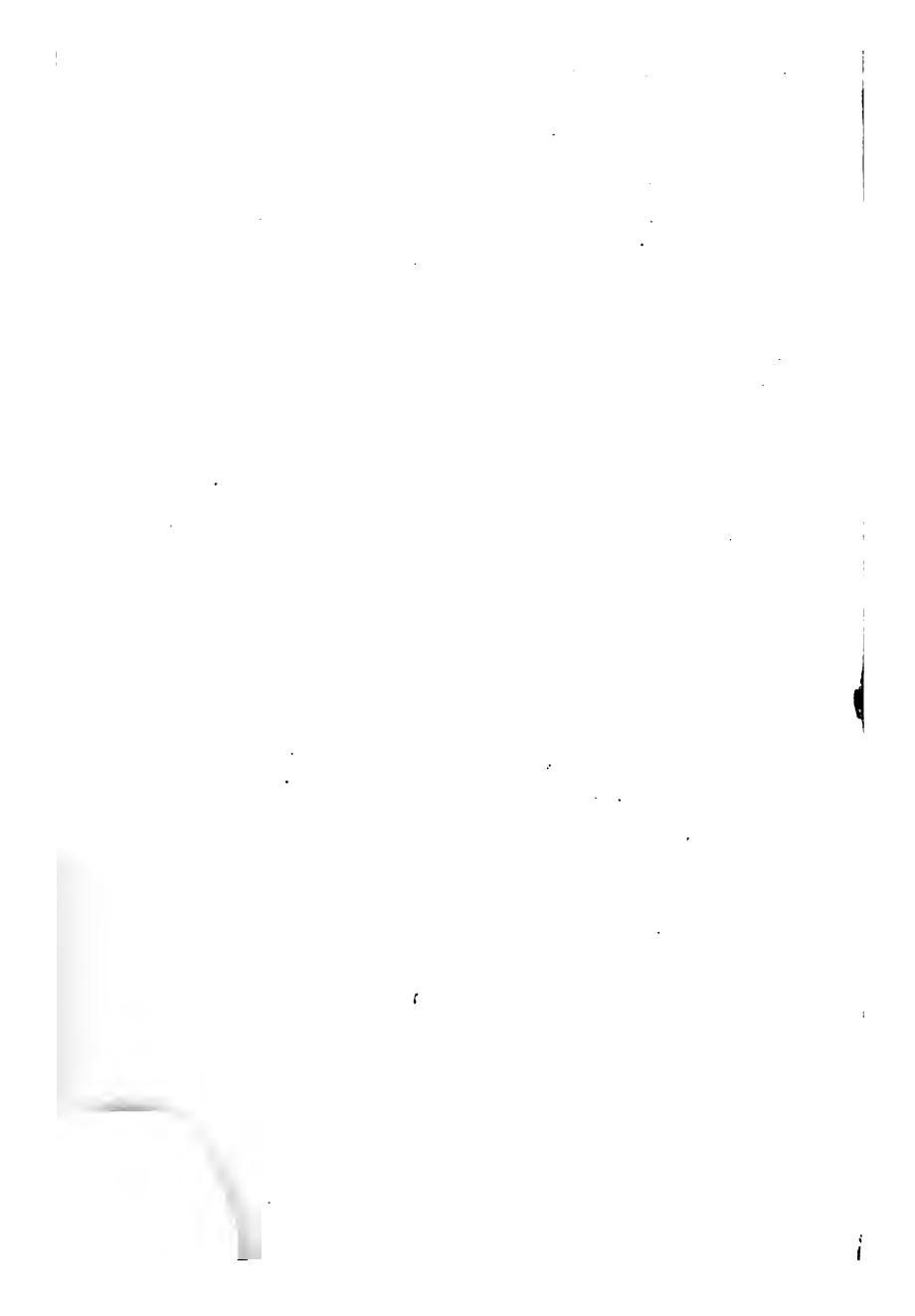
When we reached the house, my mother sat in the doorway with little Charlotte on her knee, playing with her light flaxen curls and chattering to her. She stopped, looked at Marcella, then at me, and for the first time since my father died I saw the flash of unalloyed happiness light up her cheek.

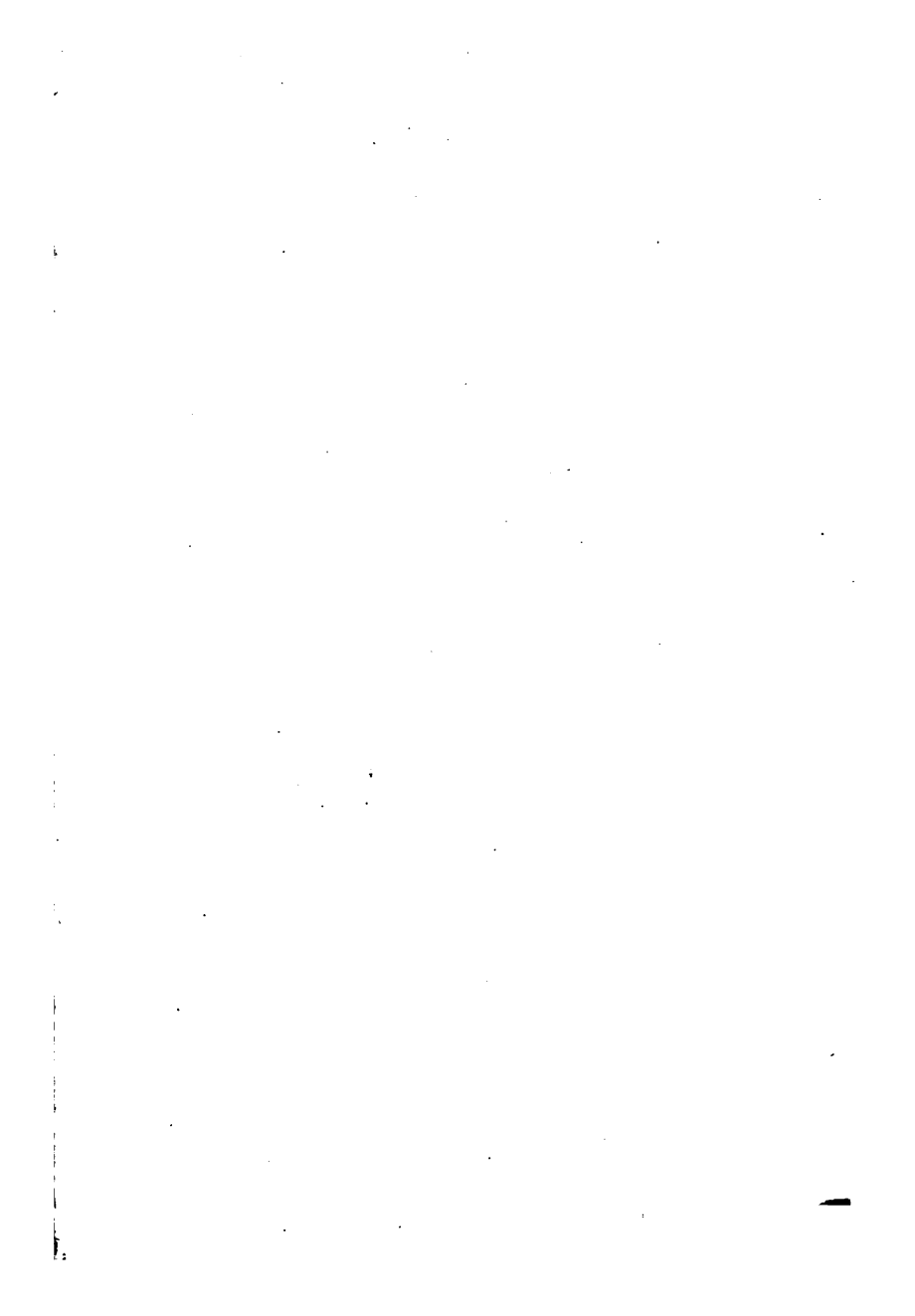
"At last?" she said.

She put down the child; she embraced and kissed us both.

"Yes, mother," replied Marcella, "at last."

THE END.





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